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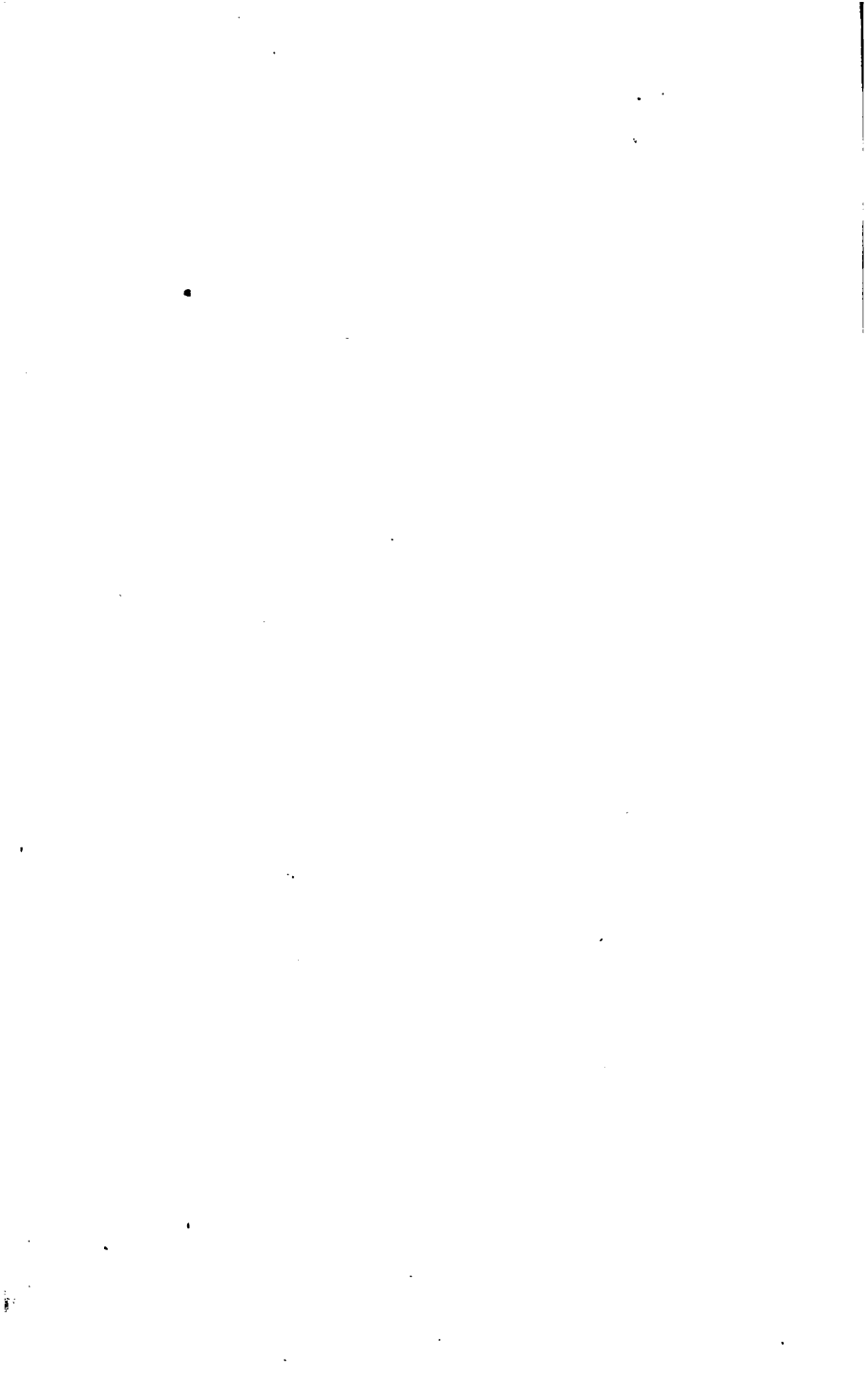
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STUART OF DUNLEATH.

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VOL. III.



STUART OF DUNLEATH.

A STORY OF MODERN TIMES.

BY

THE HON. MRS. NORTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.

LONDON:

COLBURN AND CO., PUBLISHERS,

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1851.

1st divorce act (England) 1857
1st married women's property act 1870

LONDON:

Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

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STUART OF DUNLEATH.

CHAPTER I.

TIB'S SHEAF.

THERE is something disjointed in falsehood. Never yet was there a lie so well constructed, that the mortar held to all its bricks. It seemed easy enough to arrange that David Stuart should pass as Mr. Lindsay, during the brief stay he intended to make at a place where no one could recognize him ; that Eleanor should call him Mr. Lindsay, and that he should answer to

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a name which he had already borne for eight years. It seemed easy to reckon on old Sandy's fidelity ; the only quarter in which the chance of detection could possibly have been feared. And yet unexpected difficulties and embarrassments, started up like thorns in the path that seemed so smooth and simple ; and petty vexations which they had never counted on, threatened to neutralise all foresight as to the dangers which alone they had guarded against.

Tib's eye was on them !

It is easy for a gentleman, whose name is Mr. Stuart, to call himself Lindsay ; but it is not easy for two people who have known each other intimately for a series of years, to behave as if they were mutually strangers. No guarding of the eye, or guarding of the tongue, can do this. There is a halo of gentle familiarity round people who have lived much together, and have a great regard for each other, which makes

itself felt with as much precision and mysterious evidence, as the existence of mesmeric power.

Tib had not been two hours at the Castle before her attention roused itself, like a pointer that scents game. Tib's mind pointed. Tib's mind scented a secret. For Tib was prodigiously shrewd ; and especially she had that sort of quickness peculiar to children, servants, and uneducated persons who live in towns ; the quick watch, the reading of human faces, habitual to those who are occupied with no intellectual or abstract ideas ; a sample of which Eleanor had experienced the day she had questioned Bridget Owen, and saw Sandy and the gardener observing her. It is the one talent which accompanies ignorance ; and if rural boors seem to make an exceptional case, that is because your rural boor reads only in the ploughed furrow, the meadow grass, and the clouds of the sky ; and therefore he is a

prognosticator of weather, but not a physiognomist. He is stupid in a witness-box. I was present at a case in which a man had been struck from behind a hedge. It was a question of malice, or inadvertence.

“Did the lad seem to know the man who struck him? did he look frightened?”

“Well, I don’t know if he looked frightened; he leaned up agin’ the stile, and seemed hurt.”

The question may seem a strange one; but your town resident *would* have known if the lad looked frightened; if he seemed to recognise a foe, or, to start at an accident; if he looked as though he meant to return the blow, but was faint, and couldn’t. In cases of suicide, a gentleman’s friends come forward, and state their amazement at the event; they cannot account for it; they put him under no restraint, for they observed nothing; but the gentleman’s town servant will state his expectation for some time past of a

catastrophe; he will state his grounds for such expectation; he observed this; he remarked that; he told Tom or Joe "at the time," that his master was very low; *he* saw all that more educated minds overlooked. And this, because it is the habit of his life to read faces.

It was the habit of Tib's life. She had practised it ever since she was a little sly staring girl, till she was a keen curious woman. She read faces, and she read nothing else.

So Tib began gleaning evidence of something; she didn't know what; evidence of a mutual understanding between Eleanor and Mr. Lindsay of Quebec; and Tib gleaned so industriously, that she had quite a little sheaf before long; and she thrashed her sheaf and winnowed it, and weighed the grain; and she carried the grain to Lady Macfarren, and they sowed it; and it brought up a crop of opinions not at all favourable to young Lady Penrhyn.

And Tib's sheaf was composed of several facts of various degrees of importance, some of which I shall present to the reader.

In the first place, Tib remarked what I have already adverted to ; namely, a degree of unconscious familiarity, an interest taken by each in all that the other said or did, totally incompatible with the usual result of a very brief acquaintance between two indifferent persons.

Secondly, lest this could by any possibility be construed into one of those sudden preferences, by which the most virtuous and prudently-conducted ladies, now and then astonish their friends, Tib observed that the attentions paid by Mr. Lindsay to the Duchess not only excited no jealousy, but now and then elicited an amused half-smile from Eleanor ; a half-smile which puzzled Tib, while it rendered her doubly eager in the solving of her doubts.

Thirdly, Lady Penrhyn's spirits rose to a degree which the recovery of her fortune did

not account for to Tib, though it did to Lady Macfarren, who disputed the point with the astute Dagoness, and was inclined to think the whole condition of Eleanor's mind, her satisfaction in the company of the stranger and her newly-acquired cheerfulness, were the natural result of a rise in the money market.

Lady Macfarren was a very Danaë at heart ; (though I do not think Jove would have cared to test the fact) ; she knew that whatever her own sorrow or depression might be, she would have found consolation in three per cent. consols ; and no man could earn golden opinions from her so easily, as he who brought news of the solid metal. But Tib was shrewd ; and Tib felt sure that with Eleanor, all that glittered was not gold ; that some other joy shone out of some Lagenian mine ; and Tib wished from her heart that she could spring the mine upon young Lady Penrhyn.

Many little circumstances occurred that astonished Tib. Once she came into the greenhouse where Mr. Lindsay and Eleanor were standing, while Sandy was training a plant over the roof.

"Sandy, my man," said David Stuart, "you've got the stalks of that creeper too close; the plant will be cramped in the bloom."

"Aweel, they war closer in Indy," was Sandy's reply; and just as David was about to make some further remark, he perceived Tib, and bowed in acknowledgement of the Dagonistic presence. Tib slightly returned his salute, and thought over the sentence he had spoken, and which she had heard with her own Tibbish ears. It was strange, merely from the tone; the familiar carelessly authoritative tone; it was not the way a common guest and a stranger would speak to a servant of the house.

On another occasion, David was reading out loud to the ladies while they sate working in the evening. He read very well, and the Duchess of Lanark had entreated him, in the prettiest way, to "make music after hers," by reading some of Shakspeare's sonnets. Tib felt rather inclined to yawn; Lady Macfarren read the newspaper to herself with supreme indifference, and then went to bed. The Duke of Lanark remained discussing some estate plans, with Lord Peebles and Mr. Malcolm, at the other end of the drawing-room.

David read one sonnet after another, as they came; making comments with Eleanor and the Duchess. Presently he read one in which his voice suddenly broke so completely, and told the ear so plainly that something in it affected the reader with an emotion vainly struggled against, that Tib swallowed a half-perpetrated yawn by pressing her hand against her mouth, and looked and listened

eagerly. She heard David read these lines from Shakespeare.

“Thy loving pity doth the impression fill,
Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow;
For what care I who calls me good or ill,
So thou o’ergreen my bad, my good allow;
THOU art my All-the-World!”

David never looked up, or showed sign of consciousness as to which of his audience should sympathize in the passionate emphasis of the last words; but Eleanor, poor soul, looked across from her work for a moment at the countenance of the reader. Eleanor looked at him! Oh! did ever one brief look hold so much love, and pity, and desire to comfort?

Tib saw it with her Tibbish eyes; hard, keen, and green—and she opened them wide at the sight.

Another evening, David being asked to sing, sang a Neapolitan air which Tib recognized; and she said:

“Well now, Mr. Lindsay, I’m just

wonderin' where ye could have got yon tune, for I never heard any one sing it saving and excepting Lady Margaret Fordyce, who brought it from Italy with her."

David was not embarrassed. He turned the leaves of the Duchess's music-book carelessly over, and said :

"Well, I should have expected to find it here ; songs travel all over the world ; it is well known in America."

But Eleanor had again betrayed herself by a look—a look of extreme anxiety and terror, directed alternately at Tib and the false merchant of Quebec, and Tib was not to be *déroutée* in this way.

Once, (and this was the crowning handful in Tib's sheaf,) Mr. Malcolm, incited thereto by the Dagoness, to whom he still bore a Tibbite loyalty and whom he still considered "pairfect," and only elevated to the position she deserved, in becoming Countess of Peebles, began questioning David as to "what Lindsay

he was ; for it was surely a Scotch name, and nae doot the family of settlers must originally hae been Scotch." David replied boldly enough. He said certainly he believed the race he belonged to, was a branch of the real Lindsays, but they had been in America for several generations, and the Lindsays would hardly perhaps think it complimentary his claiming to be one of them. He then walked to the book-case and appeared to be studying the Peerage.

"He's one of the Linsey Woolsey Lindsays, you see," said Lord Peebles chuckling, to Eleanor ; "one of the Linsey Woolsey Lindsays, eh ! and they would'nt think that the right sort of stuff, eh ?"

Checked in this jocularly by Tib, who no longer welcomed the little Dagon's jokes as indulgently as when he made his celebrated allusion to the ghost of 'Rob Roy,' Lord Peebles asked Mr. Malcolm what price he thought Dunleath would fetch.

“Is Dunleath again for sale?” said Eleanor.

“I thought ye knew it was for sale,” said Tib; “my mother just abominates the place, it’s sae eerie and lonesome. She desires to dwell in Edinburgh noo I’m married, and she wished Lord Peebles might have had it for a shooting-box; but he’ll not be shooting much, I’m thinkin’, and I like the place no better than she does. It’s just a varry desert.”

“Puir Mr. Stuart thought it just a varry paradise,” said Mr. Malcolm with a sigh; “and I’m muckle o’ his opinion.”

“Weel, he’d ha’ got a sheriff’s officer, wi’ a writ for a flaming sword, to stand over his paradise if my father had’nt given him money for it that took him out o’ Eden and awa’ to Italy,” said Tib with a spiteful laugh.

“I can’t think how he ever contrived to run through so much money,” said Lord Peebles.

"Especially when he never paid ony of the money he owed," said Tib with another laugh.

"Weel, he was a varry careless man, and he was greatly given to peectures and conveeviality, and they sort of devarsions," said Mr. Malcolm, "whiles he was fou, and whiles he was sober ; but for the maist part, (o' late years especially, when his troubles just overcame and overshadowed him) he was fou ; and a man maun keep his head clear and his blood cool, that wad get through deefficulties. He was a varry careless man."

"Careless," said Tib impatiently ; "I'm really surprised that a man o' your sense should tak up wi' sich expressions, Mr. Malcolm. Careless ! He was just a drunken auld cheat."

"Weel, it was maybe no exactly a wiselike expression, Leddy Peebles," observed Mr. Malcolm, submissively, "but the man being ruined and dead—and his family dispaired,

and having received great kindness frae his leddy, when I was a wee lad, I just feel a sort o' shrinkin' in my tongue to name him hairdly."

"Hoot," said Tib, with something between a laugh and a snort, "drunkenness is drunkenness, and cheatery is cheatery, whether the laird's wife was kind to ye, or no. She held her head high eneugh at one time; and had to bend it low eneugh."

"She just bent it into the grave, Ledydy Peebles; whar the Lord hid it frae haird words," said Mr. Malcolm, with something positively approaching to reproof and remonstrance in his tone; "and there's no ae body, high or low, that remembers that noble creature Mistress Stuart o' Dunleath—"

But here Mr. Malcolm was so frightened at the glare of Tib's astonished eyes, that he backed out of whatever he was going to say in favour of David's mother, into the cowardice of habitual concession.

“It’s no that, however,” said he, “that sud blind a man to facts ; and it’s true as ye stated it, Leddy Peebles, with yere usual clear-sightedness into a’ human affairs, that a man that’s aye drunken, maun be held to be a drunkard ; and a man that’s aye spendin’ whan he should be payin’, maun beware of folks ca’ing him, what ye ca’d him but noo.”

“What *I* ca’d him but noo,” exclaimed Tib with a fierce imitation of her quondam suitor’s faltering tone. “Hoot, man, what a’ the world calls him, that ever heard o’ the man. My father knew his affairs well eneugh. They Stuarts are a disgrace to the name o’ Stuart. The varry matter ye’ve had to settle lately aboot Lady Penrhyn’s fortune, at my brother’s office, might guide ye to that conclusion ; I say Stuart o’ Dunleath was just a drunken auld cheat, and it’s clear his blood’s in his son.”

The Duke of Lanark had drawn near them ; having caught some broken phrases of the conversation, which he feared was taking a turn painful to Eleanor. David Stuart had heard also ; he turned at the last phrase—his lips parted to speak—when a gentle hand with a rapid motion arrested the words, and a gentle voice whispered “ command yourself.”

Tib saw the gesture, rapid as it was : she saw that words were uttered, though she could not hear what they were. And some one besides Tib, saw this strange incident. The Duke of Lanark perceived Eleanor’s hand touch Mr. Lindsay’s wrist, and his frank face turned with surprised scrutiny to David.

“ We are all of us very hard upon faults we do not understand,” said he in Margaret’s tone and manner ; and he sat down by Eleanor.

Defend yourself, David Stuart ! Defend the memory of that kind hospitable reckless

father ; beloved to the last with all his errors and imprudence in his own home ; among those who stood nearest to his faults, and suffered most from his follies !

Defend his memory, whom you believe (not without good grounds) to have suffered less from his own imprudence great as it was, than from the skilful advantage taken of that imprudence by the wily writer who had the management of his affairs, and the dishonest gains of the man who built his own fortune out of his employer's. Defend him, when that man's daughter dares to slur the victim on the authority of the victimizer ! Defend the memory of the husband your noble-hearted mother loved with unswerving affection through ruin and discredit : holding with the poet :

“ What colder thing can strangers do, unknot by ties
of blood,

With every right to change their mien according
to their mood ;

What colder thing can strangers do, than leave
us, when they find

All is not perfect in the heart, or noble in the
mind ?

I pray Heaven bless the earnest love, which, like a
constant river,

Where once it frays itself a course, will roll therein
for ever ;

Not doling measured kindness out, as if it were
reward ;

Not keeping tenderness engaged, with reason for
its guard ;

Not steering, under careful sail, a calculated
course ;

But humbly true to simple vows—' For better or
for worse.' ”

For the sake of her who so well understood the value and the force of those simple vows, defend your dead father, David Stuart !

Pale, fierce, embarrassed, Mr. Lindsay of Quebec faltered forth a few words.

“ My friend Stuart,” said he, “ would be much surprised at the hard judgment passed

upon the Laird by Mr. Peter Christison's daughter, holding, as many did, the opinion, that had his father's affairs been in other hands, they might perhaps have righted."

"Nae doot," said the Dagoness, reddening, "and his ain too, if *they'd* been in ither hands. Do ye ken Mr. Stuart weel?" and in Tib's green eye came a gleam of spite, like a line of light on a turbid wave.

"Well enough, Lady Peebles, to know that though no friend could defend him successfully, yet he does not deserve such bitter enmity from those who are unacquainted with him."

"Will ye no favour us with a tune on the hairp?" said Mr. Malcolm in an alarmed voice to the Duchess, whose large, lovely eyes were riveted on Tib, with more anger than their habitual softness of expression seemed to render possible.

"Do, my dear," said the Duke. "Let us

have music and not discord. Let us hear that beautiful march, with a harp accompaniment. Lady Penrhyn will assist you, I am sure. Mr. Lindsay, will you play a game of chess?"

Having thus broken up the little circle, the Duke moved towards the further end of the apartment. As they passed down the room, the Duchess, lifting her re-softened eyes to Stuart's face, said plaintively :

"I never saw such a disagreeable spiteful woman as that, and about a gentleman she knew was your friend, too, and Eleanor's friend; for though he behaved ill about Eleanor's fortune, *she* never said a hard word of him. I am sure, Mr. Lindsay, you will leave Scotland thinking us great barbarians."

And the Duchess looked as little like a barbarian, as a duchess in a pale silk dress, with a sylph-like figure, and long eyelashes, could possibly look. The Duke said nothing

more; he sate down silently to play the game at chess. I do not think either gentleman could have given any reason for the various moves they made; or knew precisely how it came to pass that after a certain number of such moves, one succeeded in checkmating the other.

Nor do I think the composer of the music would have felt otherwise than bitterly disappointed, had he heard the slurred uncertain execution of the piano accompaniment, under Eleanor's trembling fingers, and the somewhat capricious vigour of the harp chords during a portion of the march, while the Duchess was thinking angrily what a very odious old maid that silly Lord Peebles had married.

Had it been the air known by the name of the "Trumpet Minuet"—an air once played during the march of Scottish criminals to the place of their execution—and had Tib been led along, weary and

humbled ; her head drooping, her neck ready for the hangman's rope ; I fear, gentle as the Duchess really was at heart, she would not, in the first moments of her displeasure, have heard that dreary music with much regret.

But why do I conjure up such an image ? Tib humbled ! Tib with her head drooping ! Nonsense ! Tib was to be " Tib triumphans " to the end of time. Tib was to ride through the world always, on the Hypogriff of her success ; as proud (though fortunately for the bystanders, not so nude) as Danneker's statue of Ariadne.

CHAPTER II.

A DELAYED CONFESSION.

IT was Sunday. Sir Stephen Penryhn was expected home on the following day; Eleanor and David Stuart lingered together. Their false position became more apparent as the return of the master of the house drew near. Though there was neither love nor confidence between Eleanor and her husband, though there was no chance of his questioning or doubting the information he had received respecting the arrival of Mr. Lindsay of Quebec, who had it in charge to arrange

divers matters in England and Scotland, for Mr. Stuart in America; Mr. Weston who had sailed for India; and Mr. Nevil's family; though detection did not seem, and was not, one whit more probable after Sir Stephen arrived, than before, yet the secret weighed more heavily on Eleanor's heart. She must meet her husband acting a lie; she must meet him, doing the honours of his house to a guest who was, in point of fact, an impostor. It was painful—intolerable. Eleanor did not see why David should not at once release her and himself from the bond of this fatal concealment; why he should not take the opportunity of her husband's return to say;

“ I did not choose to await you, the object of inimical curiosity among persons all more or less aware of my past history; but the fact is, I myself am Mr. Stuart, and am here to offer in person all necessary explanations respecting the replacing of this money,

and the unhappy speculations which led to its involvement."

Oh, if he would do this, what a relief it would be to Eleanor! She watched his countenance as he sat, wrapped in gloomy abstraction; thinking, not of his false name, or the bitter past, or the difficult present, but of one sole feature in to-morrow's events; that he should at length see Eleanor's husband; this husband of whom she would not talk, but with whom she had admitted that she did not live happily. This master of her and her destiny, in whose hands he himself had left her, when he fled his post as guardian of her life's best interests. The desire to see Sir Stephen Penrhyn had become quite a feverish sensation in David Stuart's heart.

As they sate silently together, the door of the drawing-room opened, and Lady Macfarren appeared: bonneted, booted, and shawled: which feminine preparations, somehow in her, never appeared feminine; but rather gave the

idea of a "panoply of war," as though she had donned full armour and a complete suit of mail, and had come to defy you, *cap à pie*. Even the parasol, with which the fair sex are wont daintily to shelter their complexions, altered its purpose in the hands of this vigorous lady : and when closed, often served to "thwack" a rebellious dog ; when open, was borne before her, like the bosky shield of one of Ossian's heroes : as though the sun, that great honest inactive foe, did not so much signify, and it was the wind that had to be "met front to front upon the untented field ;" the wind, that treacherous skirmisher, whose daring and gusty attacks, often delineated with more precision than grace the majestic proportions of Sir Stephen's sister, through the folds of fine spun tartan, which it was her good will and pleasure to wear without what she termed "the ridiculous encumbrance" of a *crinoline* petticoat. And I do not say she was wrong, I am all for

the classic folds of the Caryatide drapery, *versus* the modern *crinoline*, if the fashion could be put to the vote and carried *nem. con.*, but the contrary being the usual practice, Lady Macfarren's dress had something singular and masculine in it; as though it were a compromise between female attire and those articles which are never mentioned in polite society, by their proper (or improper) name: articles which were worn by Lady Hester Stanhope as part of her Arab costume, but over which when she received visitors, (as we are assured by Mr. Kinglake, in that most spirited and entertaining work, 'Eöthen,') even she was in the habit of dropping "several folds of muslin."

Lady Macfarren stood then, in the doorway; and by her side stood Tib, also dressed for walking. No, not dressed, you cannot use so common-place a term as dressed, for Tib; though you might for Lady Macfarren. Tib, was what poets call "arrayed," she was

arrayed in the proper walking costume of a countess of the nineteenth century, as combined and contrived by Madame Centlivre Broché: a costume of which satin seemed the ground-work, and lace the superstructure. They stood in the door-way and looked into the room with what Spenser terms "a much misliking eye."

"Are you ready, Lady Penryhn?" said the mailed sister-in-law, "or have you clean forgotten all about divine service this morning?" and she turned an indescribable glance on Stuart.

"I am not ready; I had no idea it was so late," said Eleanor, glancing at the clock on the chimney-piece.

"It's not particularly late," said Lady Macfarren, drily, "though you don't seem to have much notion of the time. But as we have rather a long walk to take, I thought we'd better set out at once. Lady Peebles and I will walk on; the Duchess has a head-

ache, and does not mean to go at all: some folks have their head-aches on very convenient days of the week."

"So we'll just walk on," said Tib, "and tak Mr. Malcolm with us, and I've nae doot whatever, but ye'll both do yere varry best endeavours to overtake us."

And Tib's parting glance before she closed the door, and Tib's snorting laugh, told of that fine irony by which language conveys a meaning precisely the reverse of our spoken words.

Eleanor coloured and looked down, and there was a shade of nervousness in her manner when after a short pause she addressed her companion, speaking in that hurried rapid continuous tone, often adopted by persons who feel embarrassed.

"It is a long walk; I had certainly forgotten that; for to-day Mr. Greig will not preach at Logie, but at Carrick. He preaches on alternate Sundays at Logie, and the other

days we go to 'the hill ; or to a large barn belonging to one of the principal tenants, for there's no church built yet at Carrick. Sir Stephen was applied to by Lord Glensittart and Campbell of Broomie-law, to assist in building one, and I believe the Duke of Lanark has already subscribed, but they all thought Government ought to do something towards it, as Carrick is quite as populous as Logie ; and there was a dispute about this ; meanwhile we are without a church at all."

Eleanor paused at last, but David Stuart made no observation ; he was leaning with his elbow on the mantelpiece looking at the peat fire, which was getting dull and full of white smothering ashes.

A basket of fir chips stood on one side of the hearth, and Eleanor knelt down and put one or two into the smouldering embers. The bright crackling blaze startled her companion from his reverie. " How

thoughtful you are !” said she, as she looked timidly up in his face.

David Stuart smiled : one of the old careworn smiles, that had so often haunted her memory. He turned from her and walked to the window.

“ You have made the room too warm,” said he, “ look what a glorious autumn sunshine there is. Put on your bonnet, and let us follow those two meek saints on their sabbath pilgrimage.”

Eleanor left the room to prepare for her walk, and to wonder how she could avert the sort of sneering condemnation which was evident in the manner both of Lady Macfarren and Tib. They obviously suspected something ; what did they think ? what did they suspect ? Eleanor sighed under the burden of her secret : but ah ! how her heart would have swelled with indignation, could she have known the real

conjecture of the excellent ladies. How she would have shuddered with fear and amazement, could she have guessed that they had made up their minds (*both* their minds—for they had openly consulted and spoken of it together) that Mr. Lindsay was Eleanor's lover! Her lover; not in the vague English sense of the word, as a wooer and admirer—but to the full extent of the Parisian translation, which draws so fine a moral line between the *amoureux* and the *amant*.

Tib's keen reasonings about young Lady Penrhyn's indifference to cash, which had at first seemed but 'dubitable' to the Highland Danaë, gradually acquired force from the strength of corroborative evidence. Lady Macfarren became convinced that the recovery of Eleanor's fortune, was *not* the source of her young sister-in-law's satisfaction: and with a rapidity far beyond Tib's, who was still "putting this and that

together," to produce a case sufficiently complete, she at once took up with the conclusion, that a successful love intrigue had absorbed and brought her back to cheerfulness. That she had known Lindsay formerly, they could not doubt; when, how, under what circumstances, they had not precisely decided, and were still endeavouring to decide; but that his presence at Castle Penrhyn was an outrage on the insulted honour of its absent master, was as clear as day.

Lady Macfarren had private experiences of her own, which strengthened her in these conjectures. Her early married life had not been without adventures. She had passed, what to borrow again from our continental neighbours, is indulgently termed a *jeunesse orageuse*. Could the light whispers of the silver larches, which bowed over the lake at Glencarrick, have acquired as audible a voice as the reeds in the reign of King

Midas, many stories might have been repeated, which, fortunately for Lady Macfarren, remained unknown. Even Dunleath—deseccrated Dunleath—might have told something of Mr. Peter Christison, which his good busy wife never knew; and how, as the latest wooer of Danaë's autumn, he gave and received at the most favourable rate of exchange, tokens of affection whose sum total was never publicly balanced. How he advised and superintended the drawing up of old Penrhyn's will, by which Danaë ousted her brother (then but a lad) in his expected inheritance of Glencarrick; and how for years, with co-relative sympathies, the writer and the lady mingled calculations in plain figures, with declarations in equivocal words; making Love wait upon Mammon, with a humility due to Love's inferior position; and Mammon foster Love, as a sort of tenant-at-will paying a heavy rental.

From all which experience, Lady Macfarren derived that facile belief in the fallibility of other women, which is as sure a test of having erred, as any other evidence that can be given.

An observation I make with reluctance, since it is certain that facility of belief is general with the great majority, and that incredulity is the virtuous exception ; which would seem to prove—what the majority would be extremely sorry to think was capable of any proof whatever.

Having this opinion of every body's fallibility, and of Eleanor's fallibility in particular, Lady Macfarren resolved to impart to her brother on his arrival, all she knew, thought, advised, and suspected, respecting his wife. She sharpened her tongue to speak daggers, till it was as pointed and nimble as a snake's ; she sate stiff and upright in her chair, considering how in the best (or bitterest) manner to

prove to him, that he had been deceived from first to last. Her soul

“ Was up in arms, and eager for the fray.”

And as to Tib, what between gleams of discovery, and flashes of spite, her eyes emitted as rapid a succession of sparks, as a cat's back in a state of electricity. Sir Stephen's arrival was never expected with so much eagerness, in the memory of the oldest inhabitant of his home.

Eleanor returned slowly and sadly to the drawing-room, conning over the arguments she thought she would venture to use, to persuade David to avow his real name on the occasion of her husband's coming.

“ How long you have been !” said he, as they stepped out into the sunshine, “ I almost expected to see you in a costume like that of Tabitha, Countess of Peebles ; I am quite relieved to find that you have been this

tedious half hour tying the strings of your straw-bonnet."

"You are provoked with Lady Peebles," said Eleanor; "but indeed one cannot wonder. I think she is the most spiteful person I ever knew," and Eleanor sighed. Why did they hate her? Why were they spiteful to her? she would have been so glad to love them all, so thankful to have had friends; before David Stuart came.

Her observation required no answer, and none was made. They walked on in silence, by the gurgling burn, and through the wood of birchen trees, whose light branches lifting in the breeze, sent glimpses of sunlight on the moss and heather below.

"We are in good time, late as we set out," said Eleanor, pausing as they reached a more open space, where the path was crossed by the bed of a mountain stream, now partially dried up. "There is a fall here in winter, but in summer, the people make a short

cut through it from the road ; and the wheels of Mr. Greig's light car have not been over the sand. We have not more than ten minutes' walk to go ; the moment we have climbed that bank, we shall be among them all."

"Then for heaven's sake let us sit down under the shade of these birch trees till Mr. Greig arrives. Why should we join them sooner than is necessary. You will be the better for resting ; and here there is such a lovely view. Look how clear every object stands out against the sky. What a heavenly day ! Now, if you have good eyes, you can distinguish Dunleath ; there that white speck far away ; do you see it ?"

Yes, she saw it. They both gazed in silence on the view before them. Eleanor absently pulled a few sprigs of white heather and harebell, which grew within reach of her hand. Presently she turned to her companion.

"Is it not possible to end all this pain, by meeting Sir Stephen at once as Mr. Stuart?"

"It is not possible. I could not endure it. Nor would it be worth while ; for at all events I must go away soon after I see him."

"Why must you go?"

"I only crossed the Atlantic to see you once more, with the weight off my heart which had crushed me for so many years. You know, Eleanor, I told you the day of my arrival, that the day of my departure must follow it close. My home is not here. God knows where it is!"

With a sudden gush of tenderness, Eleanor laid her hand on his.

"Oh, do you not see," said she, "how much happier life would be, if you could get over the false shame of your name? (for I cannot think it true shame). Is restitution nothing? Are those eight years of suffering and penury nothing? Trust others to feel a little as I do, about you. There is so much

kindness in the world, in spite of exceptions like Tib and Lady Macfarren ! We might see each other here ; at Lanark's Lodge ; in London ; so much, so often ; you might be my dear friend and guardian still, instead of becoming once more a dream to me ! Do think of it. I quite dread my husband's arrival. It is the first secret I have ever had to keep in my life, and it weighs me to the earth with dismay and depression."

"Not the first, Eleanor ; there is one secret you have kept well—even from me."

"From you ! Oh, never !" and she lifted her frank soft eyes to his face, as if to let him read how little of mystery and deception lay in their clear depths. As she did so, David Stuart caught her hands.

"Then tell it me now, Eleanor," said he with a sorrowful smile ; "that secret you were about to whisper in my ear that dreadful day ? Who won your girlish heart ? On whom was all that soul and feeling wasted ?

Did you regret him? Did he pine—oh, how he must have pined, for you? Who did you love, Eleanor, or who did you think you loved?"

With a convulsive start Eleanor shrank from his gaze; his rapid questionings; the grasp of his trembling hands; but she shrank in vain. He looked at her at first with wonder, perplexity, and eager scrutiny, as though he would read her very soul. Then suddenly his hold relaxed; a suppressed exclamation burst from his lips; a joy so wild and terrible shone out of his eyes, that Eleanor's heart quailed within her. He dropped her hand, and sprang to his feet. He looked down on her, crouched there like a frightened hind. With a piteous imploring glance, she looked up at him and tried to speak; tried—but failed.

"Oh! Eleanor," said he, passionately, "what is it you fear? For the love of Heaven and all its angels, don't look as if you feared *me*!"

"You look so glad! You look so glad!" said she with anguish.

"Glad—yes! of course glad!" he spoke in a wild bewildered way. "I cannot choose but be glad; do not be afraid of my gladness. Me—me—you loved me—oh! blind idiot that I was! oh, life that lies in a wreck round me! Oh, Eleanor, gentle noble pure hearted child! Oh! God, that saw fit so to deal my punishment—my just punishment!"

And as he spoke the last words, he hid his face in his shuddering hands and wept.

Eleanor gazed up at him, her very soul shaken with an agony of pity; but not daring to touch him; not able to speak. He made an effort over himself: his self-possession returned in a degree. He knelt down on one knee, on the bank; clinging by one of the low branches of the tree she leaned against, and bending gently towards her.

“Do not tremble, Eleanor; do not fear; what is there to fear? the earth heard it, and the sky, and our two selves—where is the danger? Not in my heart, not in my heart that must cease to beat sooner than offend you. Oh! Eleanor, God bless you, whatever may follow this day to blot it out! Hark!”

There was a pause; the light wheels of a car were heard approaching through the little wood.

“Calm yourself, dear child;” said David in an anxious tone; and as he spoke, he untied the strings of her bonnet, and dipping her handkerchief in the brook, bathed her temples. “Calm yourself;” repeated he; “why should this annoy or distress you? Think of it as though you had told it me *then*; as though I had always known it. It shall make no difference between us. You will trust me, will you not, Eleanor?” and as a quivering smile passed over her pale face, he

added : " You may trust me, Eleanor ; you may indeed."

She thought so. He thought so too. But very different from any trust, or good opinion of any sort, was the result of the contemplative stare bestowed on Eleanor, by the mailed sister-in-law and her friend. They exchanged glances as she took her place amongst the group assembled for worship. Pale—shaken—confounded ; her thoughts roaming away from God and heaven, to the past ; to the days of her childhood, the days of her youth. Roaming back to a frightened comparison of her own state of mind with that of Margaret in Faust, when the demon will not suffer her to pray in peace. Unable, like Margaret, to pray ; unable to hear the words of the preacher. Seeing round her the groups of Highlanders, Sir Stephen's tenantry ; and groups of women, neat and tranquil and reverential. Seeing the farmer Macpherson,

whose house had been the last spot visited on earth by her little Clephane and Frederic; unable to suppress a moan—unable to suppress the evidence of feeling ill; pitied by Macpherson; pitied by the gude-wife that sat next her; but not pitied by Tib. Watched by Tib—not pitied. Nor by Lady Macfarren; under the fierce glare of whose eyes Eleanor felt to sink as she had never sunk before. Fiercely watched, and fiercely condemned by both; while the prayer and hymn from that hill-side congregation went up in the soft sunshine, to the Heaven that “bends over all” and judges all—but not as man judgeth!

CHAPTER III.

SIR STEPHEN PENRHYN.

ELEANOR's husband arrived, and David saw him : saw that coarse handsome athlete, who received him with great good humour, and a sort of swaggering triumph ; jesting him about being the messenger sent to put back stolen goods in their place, when the police could do nothing ; talking clearly enough of business, and scornfully of all the parties concerned ; and asking a number of questions which, though unimportant in themselves, cost David more embarrassment than he had

yet had to endure. The very first evening they passed together, at dinner, one of these circumstances which are half-provoking, half-ludicrous, rose out of the position in which David Stuart had placed himself by the assumption of a false name.

“ Take a glass of claret, Duke ; Mr. Lindsay, will you have claret ? ” said Sir Stephen, as he filled his own glass to the brim ; “ Eleanor, how well you are looking ; I don’t know when I’ve seen you looking so well ; you’ve quite got a colour. Talking of looks, I’ve a letter from old Weston, Mr. Lindsay, which I’ll show you to-morrow ; foolish sort of letter, going through all sort of explanations that have nothing to do with the matter in hand, only to shew that his dead partner had’nt wittingly cheated any one. As if I cared a curse whether Nevil was a rogue or not. Never saw the fellow, never knew anything about him ; might have been hung at the Old Bailey for aught I

care. Shows, however, how you mercantile men get into these scrapes; lucky when you get out of them without shooting yourselves, eh! Mr. Lindsay? Stuart seems to have thought twice about that; second thoughts are best; a little flinching when it came to the point, eh? Did he ever describe it to you? I've seen fellows that would blow their brains out, as coolly as pop at a partridge, but it's not common. By Jove, a fellow must feel devilish strange with the mouth of a pistol at his own. But I forgot what I was going to ask you—oh, yes. What sort of a looking fellow is Stuart? Old Weston gives rather an interesting account of meeting him in the log-hut, in his long-winded letter; (gad! that a fellow should take the trouble to write all that stuff to a man he don't know, to whitewash an old fool that has been in his grave these seven years and more! He says he was struck all of a heap,

seeing Stuart in the forest in a leather cloak and mocassins, and recognised him at once: the handsomest man he ever saw in his life. Is he a fine looking fellow? He must have had a good deal of pith in him, to stand that life in the back-woods. I often think of taking a turn at it myself, and going over for a couple of months to hunt the moose. Capital sport, eh? Is he a fine looking fellow, this dead-man-alive-again?"

And Sir Stephen tossed off his claret and paused for a reply.

David Stuart answered evasively ;

"Stuart was well enough ; but what we call fine men in this country, are not particularly suited to the life of the woods. The Indians themselves are rarely what we should consider fine men." He continued making some observations on the life of privation some of these men lead, on long journeys, and while out in the hunting-grounds. At first Sir Stephen's

attention was distracted from the subject ; he was watching his wife, who had flushed painfully at the cross-questioning to which David had been subjected, on his own appearance. Sir Stephen thought he had never seen her look so beautiful. She reminded him of days when he used to see her at balls, when she was a girl in London. Some of the old feelings of admiration returned ; when he was "in love" with Eleanor ; he repeated to her how well he thought she was looking, and then, as she led the ladies to the drawing-room, he turned again to David, and soon became vehemently interested in the accounts of "the wild sports of the West," and pronounced Mr. Lindsay to be "a deuced pleasant fellow, and uncommonly gentlemanlike."

The Duchess of Lanark, on her part could not forbear remarking to Eleanor, as they were sipping their coffee :

"I do not know what Mr. Stuart may be like, but *I* think Mr. Lindsay is the handsomest man I ever saw. Now you can tell us, Eleanor, was your guardian as handsome as Mr. Lindsay?"

"Oh! yes—that is—he was younger you know," said Eleanor confusedly, the colour again rising in her cheek.

"No—I don't know anything about him," said the Duchess rather pettishly, "and I've never liked to ask you about him while we thought he was dead, though I've often wished; I was afraid of hurting your feelings; the story was so shocking. But I've heard Margaret say he was handsome, and like Mrs. Stuart. Now describe him to us."

"It is so difficult to describe a person," faltered Eleanor.

"Was he at all resembling Mr. Lindsay, Leddy Penryhn?" said Tib.

Coleridge's lines in "Christabel," flashed into Eleanor's memory :

"A serpent's eye blinks small and sly,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head."

Her heart rose to defy Tib and her questionings.

"No—not the least like Mr. Lindsay," answered she with reckless decision.

Oh, Eleanor! oh, loathsome life of little lies; distilling like poison-drops on everything under the shadow of that great upas-tree, the first false pretence!

And it seemed more painful from the very mood in which Sir Stephen had returned. He was so extremely cheerful; so well satisfied with the news of the restitution of this great sum of money; so willing to be companionable with his stranger guest; so more than usually attentive to Eleanor; that a very whirlpool of miserable thoughts seemed to gather round her.

Yes, Sir Stephen was attentive to Eleanor. She was looking so well, so different from what she had looked for many a long day, that her beauty had almost the advantage of novelty to him. No one would have guessed, who saw his return to his home, that Eleanor was unbeloved. David Stuart pondered over it that night, as he paced his chamber, restless and sleepless ; pondered over it as he stood and saw the pale morning star melt into the hues of sunrise ; and heard the confused chirping of a thousand birds, change to the clear distinct song by which every matin warbler raised its separate hymn to the Creator ; to Him "who made the lesser light to rule the night, and the greater light to rule the day."

Night and day were alike to David Stuart. Rest was gone ; a sort of strange delirium seemed to seize upon him. He thought of his approaching departure. He thought of Eleanor, and her home. He shuddered with

a fierce mad jealousy, when he reflected that the last time this man—this husband—had held any communication with him, it was to petition *his* consent, as Eleanor's guardian, to the marriage which had taken place. That he had written humbly to explain, to submit the prospects and hopes of his rich prosperous future to David, as arbiter of the one great hope that was to perfect his destiny. They met on a different level now!

And Eleanor? She was not happy; she had admitted so much; but she had not admitted that she did not love her husband. Did she love him? There were many sorts of unhappiness. She might love him and be jealous. The Duchess of Lanark was very coquettish; she might be jealous of her. He might be inconstant—inconstant to Eleanor! It was David himself she had loved in girlhood; he had learned that yesterday; but what was girl's love? what strength could it have had against a dream

of death and wrong ? what strength to outlive him—and time—and change—and the wooing of another love to fill up the blank of horror his loss and his supposed suicide must have made ? Eight years she had been Sir Stephen's wife. Even if unbeloved at first, could this man, in eight years, not woo the wife of his bosom, to the forgetting of sorrow and the valuing of his love ?

Eleanor had been a mother ; the blessed bond of children had been theirs ; she had adored those little ones ; their memory was her first thought on seeing again the guardian of her own childhood. He remembered her look, as she lay weeping on his bosom in the hour of their meeting. He remembered the sound of her voice, and the words, " Oh ! I had two such sweet children ! But I lost them both ; they were both drowned ! " Even if unbeloved at first, must she not have grown to love the father of her children ? he who had rejoiced with her over their birth,

and wept with her over their graves? She so tender; she so good; she so made for home affections and rooted hopes, and not for the restless, frivolous world; was it likely, was it credible, that her home should remain a blank to her?

He thought of her dumb confession yesterday—that confession she had tried to make eight years ago—eight years ago, when he himself was what she loved. He saw, as in a vision, the Eleanor of those days—Eleanor Raymond—young, slight, girlish, lovely, pointing to the volume of Shakspeare in which the lines she quoted were to be found; repeating, with smiling quivering lips, the reason why the marriage proposed to her could not be. Olivia's reason: "I cannot love him." Did she love him now? She must love him. He was the sort of man to hit a woman's fancy; they loved courage and manliness. How Emma had loved that

stern disagreeable sailor! There was no reason Sir Stephen should be less loved than Godfrey. He was a handsomer man by far. What a noble statue-like figure! Something coarse and ruffianly too; but that did not always bar a woman's love. You cannot reason upon preference. She loved him, and was jealous of him. It must be so!

Her manner the day before — proved that whatever the dream of her girlhood might have been, it was gone. When the startling fact burst in light upon David's soul, that he had himself been the object of her preference; when, after years of suffering, the joy of this knowledge flashed from his eyes, how did she receive the evidence of that joy? She shrank from him as though she would have hid herself in the earth! Shame—terror—terror intense and overwhelming — terror that spoke in every feature—took possession of her soul!

Revolt — repugnance—for aught he knew. When he stood weeping before her (for he remembered that he had wept), she stirred not—spoke not. His very movement to approach her, when he knelt by her side, (though he had not ventured to touch her,) caused her to shrink anew.

She feared him ; feared she knew not what ; feared, probably, by some vague instinct, lest the admission of a love that was long past, should be held to be a claim for love existent. Oh ! if but one grain of that girlish love had lingered in her heart, she could not so have refrained from all expression of sympathy. She could not have resisted the impulse, even if repented of afterwards, with tears and burning blushes, of flinging herself for one wild moment into his arms ; of saying to him : “ It was you that I loved—then—now—always—but never let us speak of it again ! ”

This she did not do. Another love guarded her heart from all but a common pity ; from

all but a common friendship. She had embraced him readily, on his return from America, clinging to him with tears and sobs; but that was not love: that was joy and grief, mingling in such wild storm as sends the waves of feeling sweeping over the shore that sets a boundary on common days. She would never embrace him—never cling to him again! Of that he had an instinctive consciousness. Yesterday had brought them too near not to divide them for ever.

She had shrunk from him! He remembered it all now. It had not struck him so much till he reflected upon it in the silence of this wakeful night. She had shrunk from him. Let her shrink! Soon the distance of the Atlantic should divide them. Soon her home, and her happiness, and her husband—her jealousy of that man's love—her repugnance for the love she had once experienced—should be memories, not present realities, to David's heart fevered soul.

He reasoned as men reason. As the blind dream of colours, so they argue of woman's heart. Under the roof that sheltered him, the heart he maligned made its own dumb struggle with pain; and innocent, even in its self-reproach, took refuge from pain in prayer. It yearned to him with pity and affection. It bowed uncomplainingly under the burden of his present concealment, the acted character, the assumed name; and meekly it buried the shame of the discovery of her own past secret; that secret which was now, alas! revealed to David, though she knew he had never returned the love she gave; and that in those days she had mistaken the cause of his agitation. He had seemed glad. Oh! his look of joy was terrible! but he seemed to respect her still. She could only hope he would not think the worse of her; that he would remember her with indulgence and approval when he should be gone; when he should be gone, and she

be left alone in the little circle of foes, in that home where no one cared for her ; that home by whose grey stern stately gate, stood Bridget Owen's decorated Lodge !

He rose, the blind at heart, when he heard the house stirring, from the couch where he had only thrown himself at sunrise : rose, full of a wrathful grief, and went out by the road they two had walked the day before. The early sun gave brightness without much warmth, like the dawn of a love not yet strengthened to passion ; the fresh morning wind played fitfully with the quivering leaves of the birch ; the clear dew glittered on heather and moss ; the burn ran gurgling over and round its ancient play-fellows, the stones, making a very melody of coolness.

But those who have known the burning and choking that fevered David's breast ; know that, at such times, vain is all the melody and freshness of nature ; vain the struggle to breathe—the effort to be calm. The delight

of coolness and the fanning of pleasant winds, are away in some other world, beyond the sphere of our being !

He came to the spot where they had rested ; the silent bank where her sweet voice had spoken ; the tree where she had leaned her head. He looked on all with his sleepless wearied eyes, and then, with a great and bitter cry he clasped his arms round the senseless larch, and wept for the blessing lost for ever !

As he wept, he became aware of the presence of Lady Macfarren ; who, with two large deer-hounds, and an umbrella levelled like a catapult, stood eyeing him with derision and amazement.

“What devilry are ye at, Mr. Lindsay, that ye set up such a howling in the wilderness ? I’m thinking you’ll not be able to pick up broken eggs, if ye were to cry from Michaelmas to Martinmas ; and indeed crying, if it is to be done, had better fall to the

share of Leddy Penrhyn. I don't know how ye manage at Quebec, but this is the first I ever heard of a man sitting down to sob like one of the softer sex."

And this specimen of the softer sex, giving a new swing-level to the catapult umbrella, and a short whistle to her dogs, strode off in the direction of the Castle; where, in the course of the morning, she delivered in a series of set phrases, the result of her observations on Lady Penrhyn's conduct; not forgetting the extraordinary scene she had just witnessed, on the part of the lamenting guest.

Sir Stephen listened to her with excessive irritation, but with some incredulity. He knew her habitual judgment of her own sex to be anything but indulgent; and he had an instinctive, involuntary conviction of Eleanor's purity. Just now he felt a *re-chauffé* of admiration of his wife, and he was not disposed to quarrel with her at his

sister's bidding. Neither would it suit him to quarrel, without real cause, with Mr. Lindsay. He had money matters to arrange with him, and he loved money quite as much as Lady Macfarren, though not so exclusively.

As to Eleanor being kind and familiar, and all that, she always had that sort of sentimental missishness about anything connected with old days. He had seen her with a stupid weather-beaten old captain, that had made the voyage with her father and mother when they first went out to India, just married and full of hopeful anticipation. She treated that stupid old sea-dog just like a born brother. So she did a lank, gawky, red-nosed Scotchwoman, whom she insisted on driving about with, and having to dine constantly in London, only because the woman had been with Mrs. Stuart of Dunleath when she was dying,

and sate up with her, and all that. Eleanor was silly and fanciful about those sort of things, and could not be judged by what she did in that way. She was always cramful of sentimentality about her speculating guardian, and he'd no doubt that fellow Lindsay (who seemed a sharp fellow enough) had seen that, and made the most of it ; and was glad enough to stay at the Castle in pleasant company, talking a devilish deal of nonsense about a man, who seemed still likely to live to be hanged, as it turned out that he was not drowned after all.

With which light and playful allusion, Sir Stephen concluded all he chose to say to his sister. But he felt angry. He resolved to watch, even though he did not believe ; and it destroyed his good-humour. He was not the sort of man to express his feelings by a familiar classic quotation, but he felt that " Cæsar's wife ought not to be suspected ;"

and he was provoked with Eleanor for being thought to have a lover, even by his sister and Tib, and though she might not deserve the suspicion.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PURCHASE OF DUNLEATH.

RENDERED shy by the scene that had taken place the day they had attended the hill-gathering, Eleanor's manner was less cordial and tender to David than before. It altered, though not on the grounds he had believed. With a proud grief he met the alteration, by a corresponding change on his own part. She should not shrink from him again ; she need not fear his alluding in any way—no, not by a kindly look or

regretful sigh—to the past. And shrewd Tib, (for once at fault,) perceiving this change, and noticing it to Danaë, they both agreed that it was a vile attempt at discretion, on the part of the guilty pair, since the arrival of Sir Stephen at the Castle; and one proof more, if proof were needed, of their turpitude and infamous hypocrisy.

Meanwhile, not knowing the stormy currents by which this Scylla and Charybdis hoped to wreck her; and full of her own anxieties and projects, Eleanor ventured one day into the room which was called the reading-room, and where books and papers lay scattered about, but where she generally found Sir Stephen inspecting his guns, or selecting flies for trout fishing.

“ May I speak to you, or are you busy ?” said she to her husband, as she came gently forward and stood behind the chair

where he sate, occupied with a piscatorial inspection.

“ I’m not busy ; at least I can hear you well enough, while I’m looking through this book of flies ; say your say. Don’t stand behind me, stand round here by my side. How devilish well you look in that dress. What colour is it ? pink, an’t it ?” and Sir Stephen put his arm round his wife’s waist.

“ Lilac.”

“ Ah ! lilac : well, you should always dress in lilac. What have you got to say ?”

Esther never stood in the presence of Ahasuerus with greater trepidation, than Eleanor this day before Sir Stephen, for she came to speak about money, about her fortune, about the haunting dream of her girlhood. She wanted to purchase Dunleath. She explained ; but Sir Stephen seemed quite at a loss to comprehend her.

"You want me to buy Dunleath? Nonsense! Why?"

"I do not want you to buy it, I wish to buy it myself; but I do not know how it is to be done."

"Gad! nor any one else. What do you mean? what do you want? D—n it, can't you speak out?"

"I wish to buy it with my own fortune—with the money my father left me."

"Now who the devil has been putting this into your head?" said Sir Stephen with sudden fierceness, releasing Eleanor's waist, and pushing back his chair as if to face and confront her.

"No one. I have always wished it. I thought of it long before I was married: before I grew up. I meant to have asked my guardian."

"Well then, you'd better have asked him first, (though he don't seem to have had very clear ideas of who property belonged to,) how a

married woman could purchase anything, seeing that what's hers is her husband's. How the deuce are you to buy Dunleath when you havn't a farthing in the world?"

"But now—now that I have my fortune again," persisted Eleanor.

"D—n it, how stupid women are, in all matters of business. Your fortune's mine: do you understand that?"

"The fortune my father left me!"

"The fortune your father left you. No married woman has a fortune of her own, as you call it, that isn't specially settled upon her. There's no such settlement in your case, the money has fallen in, and been replaced, that's all. I'm your husband, and it's mine."

"I do not understand."

"Oh! confound it, I'm not going to spend the whole morning talking business with you. Everything that's yours is mine. The clothes you have on, the chain

round your neck, the rings on your fingers, are mine. The law don't admit a married woman has a right to a farthing's worth of property. If you were robbed to-morrow, and chose to take it into court, the thief might be acquitted, unless the loss were laid in my name; I've seen a man acquitted in that way; because a married woman can't have moneys of her own; it's her husband's money."

"But will you not suffer me to employ my money in that way, even if the formal law gives it to you?" said Eleanor.

One of Sir Stephen's fearful bursts of swearing greeted this question: one of those thunder-crashes of execration, rolling gradually away in a peal of blasphemous expletives, with which he always prefaced any angry speech. "Take care what you're at!" said he at length. "If I believed one quarter of what Janet would have me believe! I warn Mr. Lindsay not to meddle—for if he does—by ——"

“ Sir Stephen, I beg you to hear me, and to believe me ; no one has advised me to this step. I wished to buy Dunleath when I was quite a child. I intended it as soon as I should be of age. Mr. Stuart was not aware of my wish then ; and I have taken counsel of no one now.”

“ Why buy Dunleath—why ?” and Sir Stephen’s irritation seemed to increase instead of diminish.

“ When I was very young, I had a notion—a romantic notion if you please to think so,—of buying and making a gift of it to my guardian. Now, I wished to buy it, to prevent its passing again into the hands of strangers ; I thought, as it was so near our own place, that the land might be of value to you as an addition to Castle Penrhyn ; and I thought—”

“ Perhaps you want it for a dower house ?” said Sir Stephen, with a fierce sneer ; “ perhaps you thought of setting up as Lady of

Dunleath on your own account? Now mark me. Your cursed sentimentalities about this guardian of yours, Stuart of Dunleath, or Stuart of Botany Bay—your extraordinary welcome of the friend he's chosen to send over here, (no doubt to pave the way, and sound whether he has any chance of being able to show his own face in the country by and bye)—your sighings, and talkings, and ridings, and walkings,* with a fellow you only made acquaintance with five weeks ago, only because he's a sort of messenger from the man who did you out of your fortune when he wanted the use of it, and gives it again as a favour—all this, is cursed odd and cursed improper. It has quite upset Janet; she don't know* what to think about you; nor Lady Peebles either—not that I care a d—n what Lady Peebles thinks. They're both of them convinced, that you're on terms of familiarity with that fellow Lindsay, such

as no married woman ought to be, with any man. It's well for you I don't think so, or by — I'd cut the fellow's throat like a deer's. But as to my encouraging all this whining, or buying David Stuart's d—d place, or any other place that he's had anything to do with, I won't. Curse me if I wouldn't sooner be without an acre in Scotland: curse me if I wouldn't rather you were lying in five foot of ground in the churchyard of Carrick, than signing the title deeds of Dunleath for either of us. And so now you have it—and there's my last word: the money's mine, and you're mine; and 'ware the man who meddles between us!"

'Ware, indeed, any one who saw the fury of that violent brow; and heard the strenuous hand fall with a clenched stroke on the table from which he rose, grinding his teeth over the last sentence! 'Ware all risks from which brute force

could guard Sir Stephen and his best interests !

Eleanor's low voice rose on the pause of his silence. She had long ceased to shudder and turn faint at the oaths and exclamations with which her husband habitually interlarded his discourse. She had heard them constantly repeated for eight years. But she had never before heard the most distant allusion to the possibility of misconduct on her part. The crimson blush that flushed her cheek, at this sudden explanation of what Tib and the mailed sister-in-law had intended to insinuate, the day she had forgotten that Mr. Greig preached at Carrick, deepened and fixed there like a brand of shame. It was a new sensation to Eleanor ; she had often been miserable, but never ashamed. To the haunting consciousness that David Stuart now knew the secret of her unwooed and unrequited love in girlhood, which already

oppressed her, was superadded this blunt intimation of what others supposed possible of forwardness and sin, at the present hour. She felt bewildered and shocked. Her mind seemed suddenly to make acquaintance with degradation; and its horrors opened before her, dim distant and lurid, like the yawning mouth of a demon cave. Her heart beat quick; she felt agitated and humbled; all the more humbled that she knew Sir Stephen was deceived in some measure, since Lindsay was not what he pretended to be. She lifted wistful pleading eyes to her husband's face, for she felt that he had something to forgive; she spoke in a low tremulous tone:

"Mr. Lindsay is going away in a few days," said she. "Going back to America; and I shall not see him again. Whatever familiarity or friendship my manner has betrayed, has been the result of— of recollec-

tions of other days. Do not let your sister misjudge me. I do not deserve it. Do not let them talk me over in that way to you."

Sir Stephen's wrath subsided. His eyes rested on her while she spoke, and he was mollified; not by her submission—not by her instant relinquishment of the subject of petition, though he felt relieved at that, for he had feared an argument as to her pecuniary rights, or at least reproaches; not even by the appeal to his protection conveyed in the last sentence, though it sounded strangely and pleasantly in his ear; but by her beauty — by the hot blush that still burned in her cheek, mounting to her temples, and throwing its soft pink shadow under the plaited coils of her hair; by the shy appealing eyes, hidden again under their quivering lashes after the first wistful glance in his face; by the agitation that trembled in her frame, as she faltered out her words. Some men might have thought her con-

fusion a sign of guilt, but he did not. He knew Eleanor ; or thought he knew her. He trusted her ; partly from an instinct in her purity, and partly from a belief in her coldness. He thought her at once better than the majority of women, and less likely to be tempted or tried. Like many men who fail to inspire a return of the passion of love, he adjudged his failure to a defect in her nature of all power of attachment. He looked at her without distrust, and with vehement admiration.

“ As to Lindsay,” said he at length, “ d—n the fellow—never mind him. He’s going, as you say, and good luck go with him ; and as to Janet, what does it matter what she says, or that old cat either ? an old maid, married to an old fool, is not likely to have much besides scandal to occupy her. Give me a kiss, and let’s say no more about it. I’m glad you did not go on arguing about money-matters. Oh !

Eleanor, you're handsomer than any woman I ever saw—if you weren't such a carved image!"

A chill revulsion of feeling thrilled the heart he held so near his own. Eleanor remembered the day at the Lodge, and her husband's interview with Bridget Owen. The pity and the passion of the young Welsh-woman; her beauty and her boldness; the speech in which Sir Stephen wished he had never married—never been father to Frederic and Clephane; the tempestuous grief, the fervent sympathy, the wild answered embrace, all crowded on her memory! It was thus that her husband desired to be loved; there was her rival, with whom in his secret heart he was even now comparing her. There, was the love she had not to give—the love whose balanced contrary is repugnance and revolt!

The kiss imprinted on his wife's cheek by Sir Stephen, seemed to freeze it back to pale-

ness, and he put her from his arms with a discontented sigh.

She lingered for a moment before she left him. The thought occurred to her, that at least after Stuart's departure, he would leave her at liberty to inform her husband of his real name, and his reasons for determining to conceal it before they had well measured the rashness of the step.

"I hope, some day," said she, "to be able to prove to you that there has been no forwardness in my manner to Mr. Lindsay—that there was nothing you would think —" she stopped.

"Oh! curse him; let's have no more of the man. I'm sick of the subject. Go your own way, Eleanor; I'll go mine."

And with a gloomy and fierce change of manner, Sir Stephen gathered up the fishing-tackle, rod, and book of flies, which were spread on the table before him, and left the reading-room. Eleanor walked to the window and

looked out. She saw her husband cross the lawn, and the broad gravel-walk, to the little wood adjoining the pleasure-ground. At the wicket-gate of the wood, lounged Bridget's eldest son ; now a handsome lad of eleven or twelve. Young Owen took the rod and fishing-basket, and Sir Stephen, while he slung the latter over his shoulder, patted him kindly on the head. Then they both passed into the wood, and away to the trout-stream beyond. The tears came into Eleanor's eyes, for she thought of her own children. She turned from the window, and was preparing to leave the room, when she was stopped by the hurried entrance of the Duchess of Lanark ; looking extremely eager, and with an open letter in her hand.

"My dear Eleanor, I couldn't conceive where you were ; I've hunted for you all over the house. How flushed you are ! you look as if you'd been crying," and the Duchess glanced round the apartment, as if to seek

for some evidence of the cause of Eleanor's discomposure.

"I was thinking of my poor boys," said Eleanor quickly.

"Oh! my dear Eleanor, I'm so sorry—dear me! But it's as well I came in and disturbed you, for I really think you'd like to know the news in this letter. Who *do* you think is going to buy Dunleath of Mrs. Christison? now only guess," and with a pretty smile, and holding the letter behind her as if fearful of the intelligence she came to convey being instantly pounced upon, she awaited Eleanor's reply.

"You had better tell me at once," said the latter gently; "I shall not guess; and if I could, you know you would only be disappointed."

"Well, so I should, because it's so strange; and yet it's the most natural thing in the world, only we none of us thought of it; and it's so lucky, you know, because we

shall all be neighbours. Margaret is going so buy it."

"Margaret!"

"Yes; I thought I should surprise you. But, here's her letter; she's on her way home; she'll be here in a few days; she says:

"When I read that Dunleath was once more for sale, I could not help talking with our best of grand-mothers about it; and about the happy days when the Stuart children and I used to play together, when we went over there, from what they called the Great Place,—Lanark's Lodge. 'Do you wish you were rich enough to buy it?' said this pearl of grannies. 'Do I wish that I were Queen of England, or any other impossible happy wish,' answered I. Then the pearl of grannies, with that dear benevolent smile that I remember ever since I saw it over my cradle, said: 'Margaret, I am a very old woman: I have lived a longer life than God

grants in general to His creatures, and a very blessed, tranquil one it has been. If I were in the grave, where in the course of nature I should long ago have been; where I am sure I should be now, but for the magic of life and cheerfulness that springs out of living with you, my Margaret;’ (I am obliged to repeat granny’s compliment, to make her after-behaviour seem reasonable); ‘you would be more than rich enough to buy Dunleath; and why should we wait till I am dead and gone, to make you happy? and Dunleath, meanwhile, be bought by some strange old maid, like Tabitha Christison—(you needn’t read my letter out loud, to Tabitha, Countess of Peebles) or some narrow-minded creature like her father, casting up sums of mingled speculation and peculation in the place where I remembered that noble-hearted Mrs. Stuart, denying herself in vain to bring matters straight; (that were crooked from more causes than Stuart’s improvidence,

depend upon that.) No, my Margaret, you shall be Lady of Dunleath. You shall walk under those grand old firs, where she walked, and sit by the sun-dial, as I've seen her sit many a summer's evening when she was a young happy wife, with 'wee toddling things' at her knee. You, and pretty little Euphemia, shall make a home of that place, and God give you a happy life there—long after you've laid my head in the grave! You are going to Scotland now, and you can make all your arrangements, and carry my instructions to my man of business in Edinburgh, and your brother will see that all is done in due form. And if you don't hurry back to Naples to thank me, I shall think you a most unnatural grand-daughter.'

“‘O, pearl of grannies,’ said I—but I shall tell you no more of what we said, only let Lanark prepare to add my name to the list of ‘neebors’ near Lanark’s Lodge, for I am to be Lady of Dunleath. Sweet Dunleath! my heart beats only to think of it, and to think

I shall have a home for life, so near you all. What an idle country life it shall be ! I will do nothing but make bowers ; pick up fir-cones ; gather violets and primroses in the hedges, and cowslips in the meadows ; link dandelion-chains ; pull off daisy leaves one by one to see if I have a love who really loves me ; (a fact I have not leisure at present to ascertain), and otherwise enjoy the ‘*otium sine dignitate*,’ which is my notion of holiday-making. Let other folks take their ‘*otium cum*,’ if they please ; but it spoils the thing, as cream spoils wood strawberries. God bless you all ; and love to all.

“ M. F.”

“ She has not got our letters,” said Eleanor when the Duchess paused. “ She has not heard, evidently, that Mr. Stuart is alive, and that my fortune has been replaced.”

“ No ; letters wander so, abroad ; but it would make no difference, you know, as to

Dunleath. Mr. Stuart couldn't buy it, at all events. The Duke told me that none of the men engaged in those schemes had preserved any amount of private property. He has contrived to pay yours back; but he did not cover his own legacy, or at least only a little fraction of it; and Nevil's children had little or nothing—nor Weston—so Lanark told me. But perhaps Margaret will get your letter at Lyons; she has ordered them all to be sent to wait her there. I have no doubt you will hear from her before she returns. Come out now, Eleanor; it will do you good; you look so ill. Let us take a little walk:”

And the Duchess passed her arm through Eleanor's, with a girlish sort of coaxing manner which she adopted when she wished to be very kind. And she was kind; though she was a little affected and very coquettish; because, as Margaret the future Lady of Dunleath said, “we must all have faults.”

Happy are they who can so balance that fact by general amiability, as to obtain from those they love and live familiarly with, the eloquently playful compliment once paid by a husband, writing on the anniversary of his marriage to the mother of his wife ; namely, that though he knew of course her daughter must have faults, in a twelve years' union he had not discovered what they were.

CHAPTER V.

THEN AND NOW.

MARGARET wrote to Eleanor a post or two later ; having received all her letters. She was, as she described herself to be, "positively wild with gladness at the good news ;" the sentences of her letter beamed like so many rays of sunshine. Full of wonder, full of merriment, full of earnestness, full of thanksgiving ; her heart seemed like a bird that had escaped from prison, and fluttering in all the rapture of freedom, dipped the wings of its joy to earth, only to soar again to heaven.

Alive, and not disgraced ; (for she would not admit that David was disgraced) she looked forward to seeing him some day in Scotland. She told Eleanor to question Mr. Lindsay as to how he looked, what he said, how he had borne his life of drudgery and pain. She was impatient to see Mr. Lindsay, and talk of David with him. She did not know exactly when she should arrive, because Phemy had a slight attack of fever and must rest from travelling for a few days ; but they were not to write to her again, only to expect her. Mr. Lindsay was to expect her too ; he was to try and get up a measure of gladness, to answer the extreme joy she would feel in seeing him, as David's friend and representative. She should love him, if he was the most crabbed old clerk that ever came out of a counting-house ; and she envied Eleanor being able to see and talk to him all day long. He was by no means to go till they had met. A few days more or less in

Scotland, could make no difference to him, and made all the difference to her. She thanked Eleanor for writing to her, even in the first agitated day, to tell her all ; thanked her and blessed her. " God bless you ! and God bless poor David Stuart ; and may we all meet some day in peace and happiness after these hard trials, and thank Heaven together for its many mercies."

Oh ! had they lied—even to Margaret ! A restless sigh escaped from Eleanor's heart, as she read the concluding sentence. She longed for, yet dreaded the moment of Margaret's arrival, when she could take her into her own room and inform her of the deception practised, and beg her to keep their secret ; that secret which every day Eleanor more earnestly wished had never been to be kept.

What would Margaret think ? What would she do ? An instinct of her disapproval smote heavily on Eleanor. She was haunted by Margaret's brightness : Margaret's frankness :

pure was her spirit's home : truth stood at the portal, to guard the world of sunny clearness beyond. Eleanor thought of her lovely friend till she felt quite guilty ; she conjured up a vision of Margaret listening to her communication ; she saw her countenance ; bright, amazed, majestic, and grieved, like the countenance of an angel made the witness of sin. She thought of her arrival with a mixture of fear. Fear—at meeting Margaret ! There was no possibility, however, of remedying matters by writing to her now ; they must abide by what they had done ; they could only wait the event : and they waited.

Eleanor talked with David Stuart of Margaret's return, and her fears ; but he did not view it with the same anxiety. He was beginning to feel despondent, reckless, abased. It no longer appeared to him of the same importance that his secret should be safe. Nothing seemed of the same importance. Known or not known, he never could

lift off the leaden chain in which his original fault had bound him. Known or not known, he never could be aught to Eleanor but a pardoned friend. When he left America, that was to him the extremest limit of hope. Where was the change? What did he desire now to be to Eleanor?

He did not ask himself. A confused feverish rebellion of grief swelled in his heart. He wanted dead years and vanished days to return. He wanted to stand again in the glorious position of being able to protect Eleanor. He wanted to see her in the blessed position of free choice. He wanted to tread the flowery road of an unknown future—and lo, the adamantine bars of the imprisoning past!

The first time he ever heard Sir Stephen speak violently and discourteously to his wife (and Sir Stephen did not, as the French say, *gêner* himself before company); the first time he ever heard the athlete whose good looks he had thought calculated to win

feminine fancy, *swear* at Eleanor, astonishment, for a moment, overbore all resentment. His amazement was so extreme, that it stood single in his heart, unaccompanied by any other feeling.

Then, a fierce contempt, an almost wild defiance, shadowed his countenance like a cloud, and passed, and left him pale. He felt that he had lost the right, and with the right the power, to shield Eleanor. He was to sit there, and hear her sworn at!—Eleanor, the little fragile darling of his youth, whom he remembered gazing on with such wonder, knowing nothing of children and their ways; listening to her discourse as to a bird's song, or fall of tiny bells; thinking it musical and sweet, but not sure at first if there were meaning in its melody:—taking her little light hand to lead her forth among sunshine and flowers; nursing her in illness; teaching her in health; loving her always—always! Eleanor, whom he remembered a young fair

girl, slight, and shy, and delicate, with a sort of timid playfulness of manner that never quite rose to merriment, and an earnestness of thought and feeling that never forsook her even on trivial subjects :—Eleanor, to whom his own voice used involuntarily to soften when he spoke, as we soften our voices to children ; as though roughness and carelessness might hurt such a gentle creature, even as the east wind may bruise a white rose :—Eleanor, who had summoned up the strength of her soul to tell him she loved him and failed, but who *had* loved him better than all the world ! His Eleanor, *his* Eleanor, confided to his sole charge by her dying father ; his Eleanor, whom he carried out in his arms whither he would — wherever was brightest, in those blessed anxious days of yore when she was too weak to walk after her fever :—his Eleanor, that he had imaged to himself, while he toiled and repented in the wilderness and the dark woods of

America and the silence of his lonely log-cabin, a happy rich contented young wife, not needing his toil, which was penance, not service ; blessed in her love, and blessing with her beauty and goodness the home she had found when the home at Aspendale was bereft her :—his Eleanor, disposed of arbitrarily, by his consent, on his earnest advising, by the fatal necessity of a position which he himself—he only—had entailed upon her.

Alas ! for human error. *Then* was the time to judge her husband ; *then* was the time to protect her ; *then* was the time to sit making bitter heart-broken reflections on the sacredness of choice ; on the sin of thrusting marriage on a young girl, as a question of expediency ; on the madness of encouraging her to sign away the bond of her life blindfold, and balance the advantages afterwards. *Then*, love was permitted by God, and authority delegated by man ; and

Help could have easily done, all that Help's wild half-brother Rescue, might struggle in vain to achieve.

Oh! then—and now! Oh! gentle, saddened, weary-hearted Eleanor. His Eleanor! no—not his: never to be his: though his for ever by the holy bond of wedlock, she herself had planned and wished to be; though the riches he had seized, and the heart he had thrown to another, had once been at his feet! The lack of a whispered sentence—the failure of her tongue when she would have uttered his name, had blighted the future of both. If it were only his life that had been made miserable—but hers was embittered; he saw it was. A few days since, and he thought with jealous disturbance of the love she might bear her husband. Was he nearer peace now?—now that he saw she did not, and could not love him?

Wild savage stories floated through David's mind: incidents he had known among the fierce lithe people he had mingled with so long: nimble slayers of their hated foes; cunning and barbarous, yet pitiable: with the passions of men, and the feelings of children. He remembered an Indian who had tracked his enemy for days, and caught him at last and killed him: his yell of triumph as he held up the scalp by its long black hair, twisted with feathers and dangling ornaments of beads and bone. He remembered another, whose squaw had been carried away, and his child killed; and who, after killing his enemy, stuck three arrows through his breast "for the child's three summers," and then begged David to put him to death with his own hatchet, "because he had felt his enemy's heart, and it was cold and quiet, and his heart burned, and he wished it to be cold and quiet too." He

reflected how, in that far land, DEATH was the umpire between men who hated and strove: but here, LIFE: here, long years of patient expectation, and waiting for strange chances. What chance could free Eleanor?

And with the last wild thought, the heart of the Christian man leaped back in horror, like one who in dreams has crept to the edge of a precipice; and with a shuddering earnestness, he humbled himself in prayer. Forgiveness for the past: strength for the present. In the past, it had been a sacred duty to interfere, to guide, to counsel, to protect: and in those days he had failed. It had now become a sacred duty *not* to interfere, *not* to advise; *not* to cross the hallowed boundary that divides even a wronged wife from such sympathy as he could offer: would he stand?

He strove to stand. Eleanor's own manner was a help to him: she was sadder, graver, more distant. That stood between

them, which either divides or rivets: consciousness. It divided them. It is always easier to a woman than to a man, to admit what the Portuguese motto calls "the impossibility of possible things." The boundaries of duty, religion and social necessity, are walls round a woman's heart, and light fences round a man's. So high, so blank, so difficult to her—that often she never even looks beyond; or having looked, drops back, with a sighing farewell to the world of hope without. So easy, so little of a bar to him—that let passion but spur him, and he leaps at once.

Eleanor had no thought of David Stuart that could stand between her and her prayers, or embitter them. She had loved him in girlhood; but that love seemed to her among things of the past. The sinful *possibility* of loving him, or any man, did not occur to her. She felt a certain shame at his knowing what she had once striven to tell him:

a certain comfort, mingled with terror, at seeing that he had been glad she had loved him, and yet seemed to respect her still: and she looked to his departure in a few days as an inevitable event, after which, she scarcely knew why, it would be easier to her to write expressions of tender kindness to America, than it had been to speak them in Scotland. She planned sometimes, sentences of affectionate explanation; for she saw he was grieved; but she never planned them, without first imagining the rolling waves of the Atlantic between David and herself. Sometimes her young heart, looking back to the past—

“Ached with the thoughts of all that might have been,”

but never for one wandering moment did it look to what might be.

With David Stuart all was different and contrary. From the hour when he became conscious that he himself had been the

object of her early attachment, the thought of her love haunted him like a dream. In the stillness of night; in the busy hours of the day; alone, or among those who surrounded him, that thought was ever present. It was a thought without form, and void, and darkness over the face of the deep, till he saw what her married life was; and then it glimmered into shape like a buoy at sea; tossing stormily, restless ever, but anchored in the very depths of his soul. He clung to it like a drowning man, waiting for further aid.

She had loved him; she was his ideal of perfection; she was unhappy, unvalued in her home. Out of these miserable disjointed circumstances, he framed nothing; but he ceaselessly thought of them, and of her. When last he saw her, he had thought of her as a mere child—his dead benefactor's child, whom he had wronged; his heart was too full of despair and shame, to be free for passion. He met her now, a beautiful,

wretched woman ; yes, wretched—he could not doubt it ; though he did not yet know all, for amongst the subjects Eleanor had never adverted to, was Bridget Owen and the lodge by the gate. He thought of her and her wretchedness all day long.

So the days passed, with more or less brightness, and more or less shadow ; and Margaret's coming drew more and more near.

CHAPTER VI.

A CARRIAGE-PARTY.

“ELEANOR,” said the Duchess of Lanark, “Mr. Lindsay and I have been planning a pilgrimage. That is to say,” added she, looking towards him and smiling, “*I* planned the pilgrimage, and he consented to put on his sandals, or his boots, and come and visit the shrine. We want to have a day at Dunleath. He really ought to see it, for his friend’s sake, as I have been telling him. We want to take sandwiches, and fowls, and grouse, and biscuit, and make a picnic under those jagged old firs ; for the place is empty

now, and we shall not have old Mrs. Christison to give us ten luncheons in one. We want to set out very early, and come back very late; or else sleep at Lanark's Lodge, which will be nearer than returning here and would give me the pleasure of receiving Mr. Lindsay at my own house;"—and the lovely eyes seemed to draw up a sort of curtain of eyelashes, and drop them again, for the benefit of the Quebec merchant.—“Now do, Eleanor; I do so love an expedition. We have not had an expedition I don't know when. You are much stronger and better than you used to be; I don't think a long day would tire you at all, and it would be *such* a pleasure to me!”

And the Duchess involuntarily thought of her own extreme prettiness, sitting opposite Mr. Lindsay in the open carriage, talking to him from under a little pink and white parasol as unlike Lady Macfarren's parasols as possible, and in a costume that neither partook of the panoply style of that Amazon,

nor of the paraphernalia and regalia pattern of the gorgeous Tib. Indeed if there were a defect in the Duchess's dress, it was that it compelled you always to feel anxious about her ; she never seemed, in feminine phrase, to " have enough on : " if a shower sprinkled the dust, you involuntarily looked round for some stray extra shawl to wrap round the Duchess ; if you had to cross the grass or heather, you could not help glancing at the Duchess's feet ; which to borrow the description of Sir John Suckling, in his bridal poem—

" Like little mice, stole in and out,"

with dainty minuteness, from under her petticoat ; and like little mice, also, seemed to be covered by some very thin little coat ; but she called the little coverings " her boots ; " and they passed for boots, and had all the appearance of boots ; copied in miniature and enamelled.

Everything else she had on, seemed to be

made up of clouds of silk and gossamer ; in which she looked lovely and light, but a little cold : yet you could not make up your mind what to advise, for the things she wore seemed quite as heavy as you could expect her to wear. How upon earth, with that slender pliant little figure, that transparent pink and white complexion, and those tiny wrists, was she to wear solid clothes, like robust women ?

It really was a comfort to see the footman lift in after her, a Maltese spaniel, which lay in her lap or by her side ; you felt it might help to keep her warm. It had a profusion of long white silky hair, and was a very mite among dogs ; but she said that she could not have endured a great ragged monster like Eleanor's Ruellach, looking as if it were in fact no dog at all, but the wolf that pretended to be Red Riding Hood's grandmother. The Duchess was *mignonne* —she was more—(I mean she was less), she was absolutely *mignonette*

and she knew it, and was proud of it. Like Queen Elizabeth, who, when informed of Queen Mary's stature, replied: "Then is she too tall, for I myself am of a just height,"—the Duchess thought other women too big; and that she herself was of the just size. Littleness was loveliness; and she had a Lilliputian horror of Brobdignag measurements. Tib's sash appeared to her to be calculated to perform the task of Ariel, and "put a girdle round about the earth." All Tib's proportions seemed to her to be monstrous. She longed to try upon the
k ancle of the obese Dagoness, the assertion of those who have lived in India—that three times round the foot of a full-grown elephant is his height. She believed it might be so in this instance.

One of the provoking things she had often done to Tib (and she did a great many provoking things, in her own *mignonne* way), was to sit contemplating her fat coarse hand,

as though it had been a large curiosity, exposed on purpose for inspection; insomuch that she nearly broke Tib of a habit she had of crumpling up her handkerchief, and resting the closed fist that contained it on the table while she talked; for which Tib ought to have been much obliged to the Duchess, for it was an awkward trick; but I don't know that she was grateful.

She could not contemplate that giant fist on the present occasion, for gorgeous Tabitha had accepted Lady Macfarren's offer to drive her to the picnic expedition at Dunleath in the phaeton: an exercise extremely agreeable to that stern female, though generally dreaded by her friends, inasmuch as her driving resembled the furious driving of Jehu. However Tib was not timid, and in due time Sir Stephen's tall sister appeared on the terrace steps, compressing her whip under her elbow, while she drew on a pair of buckskin gauntlets. She eyed the horses

with a glance of mingled severity and skill ; and having felt the fetlock of one, which she pronounced to be "groggy," and altered the bit of the other, so as to bear a tighter curb, with a careless intimation to the groom to "do his own work next time, and not leave it to her," she gave the final word of command :

"Now then, Leddy Peebles, up with you ; and if the horses are a little fresh at starting, never mind. I'll master them, or know the reason why."

Sir Stephen Penrhyn and Lord Peebles, attended by Mr. Malcolm, were gone to a cattle-show at Carrick, and were not to return till the next morning ; but the open carriage was happily occupied by the Duke, David, Eleanor, and the gossamer Duchess, who anxiously inquired if they had put in her "great wrap," in case it was damp in the evening. The great wrap was found, and turned out to be a square of very fine

spun wool and silk woven into a tartan pattern, which the Duchess said had been contrived for her "by the dear good old schoolmistress of her own school at Lanark's Lodge."

She also had her schools; which she did not exactly attend, like Eleanor, but where she sometimes alighted like a beneficent fairy, to give prizes; and secretly to wonder at all the children knew, and at the answers they contrived to make to questions which would have posed their patroness. A feeling perhaps not utterly unknown to many persons far wiser than the Duchess, who have listened to the examination of national or parochial schools; happily protected by their quality of bystanders, from the puzzling queries which somehow or other always elicit shrill responses, high up or low down in the class; but which I really think many of the examiners would themselves have some difficulty in solving.

Among the proofs given by a Government Commission, of stupidity in the children of a Welsh school, was their failure in the interrogative problem, "What is an angel?" Now, my dear reader, if you were suddenly asked "what is an angel?" when you were not occupied with beatific visions, but were staring at educational commissioners, and wondering what would come next, would you have an answer ready? We have all our vague notions of angels—but if you were called upon thus, at a minute's notice, to become analytic and descriptive, and to make other persons comprehend your private idea of an angel, could you do it? I do not think the school-children were stupid for not answering the angelic question; I think the marvel rather is, the sort of questions they *do* contrive to answer; and I think we might put one great leading question to ourselves, and that is whether we are altogether on the right tack, in the

sort of instruction we give to the poorer classes? Whether, for the benefit of lives so much more material and less intellectual than our own, more simple and practical teaching would not be better? What becomes of all that word-knowledge? It goes to keep company with the book-knowledge of gentlemen who turn out Dominie Sampsons, unfit for the practical affairs of life. It stands like screen-work between the poor and their real, busy, work-a-day world; sometimes, perhaps, becoming absolutely feverish and dangerous nourishment for minds that have no leisure for problems. We train up our poor in the way they should *not* go. We cannot give them leisure, yet leisure is the balance-weight they would need, for the sort of instruction we afford them. And this is more especially the case with the female part of our population.

As long as our school-girls answer more readily to such questions as :

Where is Kamschatka ?

How do the Laplanders prepare their food ?

What is a fixed star ?

Who is Prince Albert ?

What is Death said to ride in the Revelations ?

How much is 426 times 1247 ? instead of the more natural interrogations :

What are the habits of an English labourer ?

How much flour and suet will make a pudding for six ?

How many yards of cotton or linen will cut into twelve shirts ?

What remedies would you apply if a child were seized with croup, and no medical help at hand ?

English education for the lower classes is at fault. We teach a smattering of subjects we ourselves find it extremely difficult to master and commit to memory, though we have, what the poor have not, the habits of thought, and the luxury of leisure ; and

then we send them into the world, to begin lives of manual exertion, daily privation, retail purchases, and cottage industry ; where every farthing wasted and lost, is a drop of the poor man's blood drained away. Having taught them what is a fixed star—who is Prince Albert—how dead bodies were embalmed in Egypt—and what is the meaning of doubling a promontory—we are amazed they cannot keep house for John Diggory. We are amazed that they cannot lay by like the ant, build like the beaver, and rear their broods as easily as chickens ; we raise an angry outcry at the “stupid improvidence of the poor ;” whereas it is often the stupid improvidence of the rich. We sow tares, and we want to reap wheat.

The sturdy opinion of the village chandler, in an old fashioned book entitled “Ward's Rhyming Dialogues,” (whose grains of corn in a peck of chaff, have been long

lost and forgotten) might really be written up with advantage on the walls of every national school-room in Great Britain :

“ I tell thee, wife, I'll have our daughter bred
To book'ry, cook'ry, thimble, needle, thread ;
Make her expert and ready at her prayers,
That God may keep her from the devil's snares ;
Teach her what's useful ; how to shun deluding ;
To roast, to toast, to boil and mix a pudding ;
To knit, to spin, to sew, to make, to mend,
To scrub, to rub, to earn, and not to spend ;
With all such hussifry as well becomes
A wife for one that deals in mops and brooms :
That when she's wed, she may not think it scandal
To serve a neighbour with a farthing candle.”

This was the opinion of Ward's village chandler, and a very sensible opinion it is. The object of all training is to fit a person for the probable occupations and duties of life ; yet it cannot be denied that we frequently attempt to teach the poor,

things which have as much reference to their future usefulness, as if we gave them lessons in rope-dancing.

Such sage reflections as these, however, formed no portion of the thoughts of the agreeable party in the open carriage. I fear if David Stuart had been suddenly cross-examined as to his idea of an angel, it would have taken a form much resembling Eleanor; and each of the four, being a good deal wrapped in their own cogitations, would have been apt to give somewhat disconnected answers.

Mr. Lindsay had accepted (for how could he refuse?) the proposal of the charming little Duchess to "make him a holiday at that pretty place, Dunleath, which had once belonged to the family of his poor friend in America;" but he felt as if he were journeying to it, through the land of dreams, and the valley of the shadow of death.

Eleanor was thinking of Margaret—happy

Margaret, who was to live for ever at Dunleath ; and of days when she hung the walls of her own little dressing-room at Aspendale with copies of the views taken at this Highland place, and thought to buy and bestow it on her guardian.

Later dreams, too—dreams of days when she had planned to bestow herself, and all her riches, on that beloved guardian, recurred in spite of the mind's strife against them.

As the carriage bore them onwards to that prized—that ruined home, for which so much had been suffered and lost, her heart yearned to the protector of her childhood, the friend of her youth. She looked at him as he sate gazing out at the passing country, with soft sorrowful eyes, while the colour deepened in her cheek. As if he felt her glance upon him, warm as a stray sunbeam, David turned and met it ; met it before it could change or be withdrawn ; before her shrinking soul could gather back

any part of its wealth of love and pity.

He met it with a start so obvious, that the Duke also started from a rumination about some paper-mills he was going to establish on his estate, and observed that they were "all wonderfully silent for a pleasure-party." And forthwith David began to talk; and to look glad, and animated, and eager; and the pretty Duchess, as she answered and smiled from under the miniature canopy of her favourite parasol, thought what a sensation Mr. Lindsay would have made in London, if he had but been one of that privileged group whom she knew as the great world!

The gloom of the past seem to lift from their minds, like the mists from the hills after sunrise. They talked merrily; they laughed. David Stuart told stories of the wild Indians, and adventures in the Far West. The Duchess sang "Will ye gang to the Hielands, Lizzie Lindsay?" which she

said was out of compliment to Mr. Lindsay, though the Lizzie of his clan (for she would always have it that he belonged to the clan) had not behaved with great discretion in taking the vaunting stranger at his word, and marching off on so short a wooing; and then she laughed still more merrily, because the Duke quoted against her

“Happy’s the wooing
That’s not long a doing.”

And then she sang, “He’s coming again,” and other Jacobite ditties; and afterwards, “I would I were whar Gowdie rins;” at the end of which ballad, she said she was tired, and stopped; like a little musical box that had run down.

So they talked, and sang, and laughed, and paused, and discussed the lovely scenery through which they passed, till they reached the avenue of Dunleath, with high broken banks where irregular glimpses of sunlight

shone down on the peacock hues of Tib's many-coloured raiment, sitting in the phaeton before them ; and on the silent track which was henceforth to be the road to Margaret's home.

CHAPTER VII.

A PIC-NIC AT DUNLEATH.

THEY had a happy day at deserted Dunleath. Even Tib, in the pride of possessing all the information Lady Macfarren was eager to acquire, respecting the value of every item on the property, had no time to be spiteful; but took, with the Danaë of Glencarrick, a sort of factor and bailiff stroll, hither and thither, wheresoever Danaë most desired to pry; discussing what Margaret had paid or would have to pay, for everything, even to the eleven turkeys and fourteen fowls

in the hen-yard. For Danaë was familiar with the whereabouts; having been, as the reader knows, in habits of great intimacy with Mr. Peter Christison—"and all his family," as she herself always had the grace to add; though it was an addition which at one time, she would fain have made a sum in subtraction.

And if Mr. Lindsay could not quite sustain to perfection the character of an utter stranger, in the place where he was born and bred; yet there was not much that could have betrayed him. He was so abstracted on first entering the precincts of that changed and formalised paradise, that he really had the air of not knowing where he was. He was completely on his guard, for he had done little else but reflect ever since the picnic had been proposed, how strange and trying it would be, to be taken to see that place as a show and an amuse-

ment, which had been the home of his childhood—the dream of his youth—and the cause of eight years of his manhood being passed in exile and shame! Luckily for him, many of the walks had been altered; trees cut down and shrubberies planted; so that the Duchess really had a very decent excuse for putting forth her little hand to twitch him by the sleeve, as he was making a wrong turn to approach the house; telling him that he was very stupid, and that she should be obliged to lead him in a collar and string like Fido, if he did not follow better.

They went into the house, and flung open the shutters of the upper rooms, and looked out on the view from the window of the chamber that had been David's own in boyhood. They passed through what had once been the nursery, full of shouting, merry, lovely children; the one room where Mrs.

Stuart still saw a gleam of life's joy, when it faded out of the other apartments of that anxious home. They visited what had been her favourite little morning room on the ground-floor; opening into a green-house, where the old *corcyrus japonica* still trailed its branches against the wall, covered with tufted yellow flowers as of yore; and where "the daughters of the roses" which her gentle hand used to gather, had gone on succeeding each other, from summer to summer, changing without a difference.

There stood the little myrtle-trees from which many a nosegay had been enriched. The long festoons of passion-flower waved outside. The perriwinkle and violet-plants grew thick as ever round the steps by which the wandering party re-entered the garden. The great bush of sweet-briar, that had been the friend of David's earliest childish years, (when spring-buds and spring-flowers give such delight as after years can never match),

also stood up in the sunshine ; a silent witness of departed joy, and of vanished grief !

None can ever tell, among the thousand memories of the past, what will touch them most. Hearts that are nerved, and bear unshaken what to lookers-on might seem the most likely things to move them, will break down before some trivial image—some unexpected turn of thought. So I have seen people talk calmly, even cheerfully at times, of their dead ; and lo ! some chance word upon another occasion, some strain of music, some scene in a picture, some breath of wind, will send forth a spirit strong enough to lift off the stone that covers the sealed fountain of their tears—sealed ; not dried up !

As David stepped out into the sunshine with Eleanor, his eye fell on the bush of sweet-briar, and he put out his hand to gather a spray. Even in the act, one of those mysterious touches of feeling I have alluded to, smote him to the soul. The

sudden vision of his glad childish self, running out before his mother, in the early spring, for a branch of the sweet-briar with its leaves still in bud and scarcely scented ; the voice of that dear and beautiful mother, singing as she took it—

“There grows a bonny briar-bush in our kail-yard,”

the breath of the sweet springs of departed years; the great miseries that had followed ; the desolation that was yet to come, when he should turn away once more from Scotland, and all it held, of memory or vaguest hope ; burst over David's heart in a flood of bitterness. His outstretched hand dropped by his side ; he leaned against the doorway with averted face, and a groan of anguish escaped him.

That moment of anguish, none beheld but Eleanor. The Duchess had begged the Duke to take a cutting from a rare species of geranium, and lingered in the green-

house, watching the operation. Tib and Lady Macfarren (the latter with the account-book in hand, which was always her pocket-companion,) were calculating what the right of shooting over Dunleath might fetch, if Margaret were to let it. Only Eleanor saw David; and in that hour she saw nothing in earth or heaven, *but* that man and his grief. With a gentle, but impassioned gesture, she took his hand; and bowing her head down on it, she sobbed out :

“ Oh! David Stuart—oh! dear, dear friend.”

Her cheek seemed to rest for an instant on his hand while she spoke—the breath of her words passed over it—the plaited tresses of her hair swept smooth and light across it, in the momentary contact: so momentary, that he might almost have doubted the sense of touch; but the tone of her voice, the depth of her sympathy, who could doubt that?

“ Eleanor, said he with wild vehemence,

love me—pity me—remember me—for you are all that links me to life : but for you, I could only desire that all this had an end in the grave.”

And Eleanor did not shrink, but said fervently :

“ Rely upon it, that while I live, I never can cease to think of you with the deepest affection ; with the sincerest sympathy ; if I were dying, you would be my last thought upon earth. We shall meet again in the onward years. You see how natural Margaret thought it, that you should return to Scotland—that the past should be buried. You will return ; and Dunleath will seem bright to you again. I feel it—I know it ; though the how, and the when, are in God’s hands.”

With tearful radiant eyes, Eleanor Penrhyn looked up to heaven as if invoking it for the truth of her prophecy. Could such a prophecy ever come to pass ?

Think no more of that ; hasten to be as usual ; for here come Lady Macfarren and Tib. Lady Macfarren is hungry, and longs for cold grouse and roe-deer pastry ; and Tib is rather tired of seeing her money-loving friend, bite the point of her pencil previous to a rapid setting down, and an almost equally rapid casting up, of sums whose monotony seems to her to be but slightly relieved, by a perpetual change of figures. Tib never could cast up a sum in her life ; and she thinks it a dreary employment, and a waste of time and ingenuity ; and Tib is hot and thirsty with driving and walking, and wishes for sherry and water, or whisky and water, or claret without water, or even a good glass of Scotch ale ; all of which various liquids she knows are in the hamper, under what the Duchess calls, “ those jagged old firs.”

So they go to the jagged old firs, and they spread out their festival and carouse ; and

the Duchess says she will teach Mr. Lindsay "Here's a health to all good lasses," and "We're nae that fou'—" for that it is proper on such occasions, that drinking songs should be sung; and the Duke never will sing, and ladies can't sing drinking songs. And the Duke, smiling at his little spoiled, coquettish, but dearly beloved wife, says he will sing that minute, and that every one ought to sing. And he and David and the Duchess sing, "The banks and braes of bonny Doon" in parts, and are startled by the immense Dagoness (who has by this time quenched her thirst in each of the four different ways that the hamper made possible) joining in, in a weak quavering voice, a good deal out of tune in the upper notes, and closing her lips when she forgets the words, so as to produce a singular *voce di testa*, and a strange humming.

And while she sings, the sly little Duchess has once more an opportunity of

torturing her feelings, by a contemplation of the large hand with which, for the better keeping of time) she beats her large knee. And Tib perceives those naughty beautiful eyes fixed on her big hand; and Tib is angry, and reddens, and stops singing; and the Duchess laughs, and asks her why, and then they all stop; and Tib reaches out her big hand and grasps the bottle of sherry, and fills another tumbler of sherry and water, and pretends not to hear the Duchess, but observes that "people ought to know when they have had enough of a good thing;" and the Duchess mischievously asks, whether she means good things to eat and drink? and Tib reddens still more, and says, "Songs,"—with an angry snort; till at length the Duke remarks that it is getting late, and they had better have the carriages ordered, and the great wrap brought, and think of getting home to Lanark's Lodge; and the

Duchess, calling off her eyes from worrying Tib's hand, and looking up at Mr. Lindsay, observes that it will be "deliciously lovely, for it is so late that they must have moon-light part of the way."

So they all move away from the shelter of the grand old firs. Tib looking extremely fat and flushed; and Lady Macfarren resolutely resuming the gauntlets and bonnet, which she had laid on the grass, as though some trumpet had once more summoned her to arms.

The Duke hastening onwards a little, to order the carriages, the Duchess follows with Eleanor and Mr. Lindsay; explaining to him all the mottos round the sun-dial, which is the one thing they have not yet visited with a special inspection. Now they will go and read the mottos, while they wait for the carriages; and look at the sculptured base, which was a Greek altar in ancient days; and Eleanor smiles gently at David, and his eyes reply to

hers, that this is the old sun-dial they used to talk of, in happy times at Aspendale; the lovely piece of antique marble, whose graceful sculpture was copied by Eleanor from his own drawings; so that they two have a sympathy in all this, that the rest cannot have.

But lo! as they walk towards the altar-sun-dial, some one is already there!—A lady—a lady and a little girl: the lady is stooping over the dial, looking at the sculpture; the little girl gives a glad shout; the Duke stops; then with a joyous exclamation hastens forward; and folds the lady in his arms. *It is Margaret—his peerless Margaret—God bless her! Radiant, and brilliant, and fond as ever.*

All is confusion and hurry: she kisses Eleanor: she begins a broken sentence about the strong temptation just to have one look at the place—now her own—and which she must pass the very gates of, on her way to Lanark's Lodge. And did they expect her?—and how lucky they met!—for she

did not know if they would be at Castle Penrhyn, or at the Lodge. But in the very midst of Margaret's rapid words, her breath fails—her lovely coral mouth remains open—speechless with surprise ; then, darting forward to Mr. Lindsay, and taking both his hands at once in her own, she says :

“They never told me you had arrived ! but I've missed many of my letters, I dare say. Oh, David Stuart, how more than glad—how blest I feel, at seeing you, even you yourself cannot guess !” and Margaret bursts into tears.

There was some attempt at explanation, but to no purpose ; Margaret wept, and laughed, and gave vent to her joy in passionate exclamations, and broken phrases, addressed alternately to Eleanor and David ; clasping and unclasping her hands, speaking rapidly and fondly, looking up in his pale face where gladness struggled with distress and embarrassment. At length something

strange seemed to strike her in the manner of all present—in Tib's triumphant smile, in Lady Macfarren's astonished glare.

"Where is Mr. Lindsay?" said Margaret, looking round.

"Eh! whar indeed!" said Tib, with a snort of delight; "I'm thinking ye'll have to dig for him under your friend's feet, for he's just the root of Mr. Stuart, and naething else."

Margaret looked in amazement from one to the other. Eleanor, her lips blanched—her whole frame trembling—both hands clasped on Margaret's arm—faltering out:

"Mr. Stuart called himself Mr. Lindsay—not liking to be known!"

And then the Duke broke the spell that seemed to chain every one to the spot, by approaching his sister.

"Margaret, my dearest, be composed," said he. "Mr. Stuart,—from a very false feeling of shame for early rashness—has im-

posed on himself the penance of living among old friends as a stranger. He and I will ride on together to Lanark's Lodge; the grooms can go in the rumble of the carriage; Do you and Eleanor take the phaeton; the Duchess will, I am sure, feel much pleasure in having the company of Lady Peebles and Lady Macfarren in the britska; and we will all meet again at dinner-time."

And before the surprised offended eyes of the pretty Duchess, had recovered from their wide startled stretch of astonishment, the picnic party were once more on the road.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE PIC-NIC PARTY REFLECT ON THE DISCOVERY.

“MR. STUART,” said the Duke—breaking the awkward silence which had subsisted for some minutes after the two gentlemen had mounted their horses,—“I half expected this. I made sure, ever since the evening of that unfortunate conversation at the Castle, between Mr. Malcolm and Lady Peebles, which filled you with just indignation; that there was some mystery, and that possibly you yourself were the person whose representative you assumed to be. I saw Eleanor’s agitation

that night; I saw the gesture, rapid as it was, by which she endeavoured to prevent your betraying yourself. I reflected on the fact of your being known to be living; on the extreme and familiar kindness of Eleanor's manner (she who is reserved with strangers to a fault), and afterwards, on many little circumstances I should probably never have noticed, but for that scene of alarm. I expected that sooner or later, we should have a discovery of this sort. And now,"—added he, with one of those frank smiles which gave his countenance something better than beauty,—“will you forgive my saying that I think you were unnecessarily imprudent in returning to this country under a feigned name? that you have created difficulties where there need have been none; and that Sir Stephen Penrhyn will be the last person in the world to comprehend—” The Duke stopped.

“When I first arrived here,” said David in an agitated voice, “I had no idea that I should remain long enough to make it a matter of the smallest importance or risk, by what name I called myself. I came here for one sole purpose—to see Eleanor, and receive her forgiveness, on which I built, on which I counted, which I never for one moment doubted,” pursued he earnestly, “but which I yearned to hear from her own lips. I took my passage in the name by which alone I was known at Quebec; the name I have borne for eight years. I had every reason to feel that I had stained the name of Stuart, and I loathed the idea of exposing myself to a malevolent curiosity. But I did wrong and rashly; I feel it; and believe me I also feel your generosity, coming as it does from one so entirely a stranger to me.”

“Mr. Stuart,” said the Duke kindly, “I will not admit that the son of my father’s nearest neighbour, and my mother’s dearest

friend, and the favourite companion of my sister's childhood, is so entirely a stranger to me as you would have it. I have heard so much of you from Margaret, and in happier days from Eleanor, that we need very little introduction to each other. It would ill become me to judge your position and your actions with any feelings but those of sympathy and indulgence; and believe me, these, to the full extent of my nature, are yours. I can conceive no more bitter trial on earth, than that you underwent when you found Eleanor's fortune involved, by the rashness of those with whom you so unwisely speculated. I can conceive no more dreary penance, than that in which for eight years you had the courage to persevere, unsustained by any hope of being able to do more than win back an inconsiderable portion of what you had risked; uncheered by the friendship of any human being to

whom you were personally known. I am glad this concealment is at end. I am sure, upon reflection, you will rejoice at the event and not regret it; and that you will not owe my peerless Margaret so much ill-will for the discovery, as to refuse to pay us a visit at Lanark's Lodge before you return to America, and while she is also with us."

David Stuart could not speak; but he held out his hand, and wrung that of the noble-hearted and kindly gentleman who rode at his side.

The Duke returned the cordial pressure; and with a gay, "Now let us ride like less moody and indolent cavaliers," he spurred his horse to overtake the carriages.

It was true, when the false Mr. Lindsay came to reflect upon the subject, that it was a relief to have nothing further to conceal; a relief, to have his morbid shame reasoned away by the kind frank voice of

the Duke; a relief, to feel unchecked by the fear of any other discovery; and as they drew bridle before the magnificent old castle that bore the simple name of Lanark's Lodge, David Stuart felt something more nearly akin to happiness, than he had known for many a long year.

But the sylph-like Duchess, who had made the moonlight drive in such very different company from what she had desired and expected in the morning, was by no means so well pleased as her Duke. So, all the time she had been condescending to attract the American merchant; showing him what Paradise was; that he might, on his return to Quebec, live in a sort of exalted vision of a Duchess he had once known in Scotland—all this time she had been the dupe of Eleanor; (who no doubt looked on with amusement) and the dupe of Mr. Stuart, the speculating guardian whose conduct she had so often heard called in question!

The Duchess thought of all this with a hot angry burning at her heart. She was conscious of having made all sorts of little feminine coquettish advances ; and she kept recalling her foolish speeches and glancing looks, with such irritation, that she could have almost have offered David the cup of magic poison which the forsaken Guendolen gave to King Arthur, in the bridal of Triermain ; but which the restiveness of that monarch's steed fortunately saved him from swallowing.

Different fragments of her own discourse, made " to enchant his ear ;" attempts to show how much she knew, and had read, about America ; quotations from " Astoria " and Mackenzie's Discoveries in the Fur-trade ; explanations of Scottish manners and habits ; scraps of Gaelic songs ; the romantic account of the breaking up of the clans, by forbidding the wearing of the tartans ; all returned to her with that keen and vivid sense of shame, which

vain people are apt to feel, at the idea of having been made ridiculous in trivial things. True to her prevailing fault, she thought only of herself—her own share in all this. Her own mortifications; her own injuries; her own mistake; and she sat down to dinner with every disposition to be as bitter as Lady Macfarren or Tib.

David Stuart saw the cloud on the lovely brow, and guessed her mood.

“It is a great relief to me, Duchess,” said he, as he drank wine with her, “that this is over; and that you and the Duke have behaved so generously. I assure you I have long felt the burden of my pretence to be, greater than I could bear; and I dare not say how often I have been on the point of betraying myself, when those beautiful eyes seemed to be seriously and attentively considering how they could explain something to me. I felt so utterly ridiculous—something worse, perhaps, than ridiculous; I can

only hope you will think of it all with indulgence."

The Duchess relaxed a little from her moodiness, and smiled. He had behaved very ill; but he had called her eyes beautiful, and he had affirmed that *he* felt ridiculous. That lifted the ridicule off her, at least a considerable portion of it. After all, there had been something *infra dig.* in being on such easy terms of acquaintance with a fur trader and accountant. She was not sorry that he turned out to be a gentleman by birth and education; and his being Mr. Stuart, instead of Mr. Lindsay, did not the least alter the possibility of his admiring her.

The vain little Sylph was never hard or ill-natured; so as soon as she had left off considering herself, and her own share in these adventures, (which was not till she had thought of herself in every possible light, and replaced herself as advantageously as possible in her own opinion), as soon as she

began to think of other people at all, she thought of them kindly. Her countenance cleared, and she smiled often and gently at Eleanor who sat nearly opposite; for she could not but pity her! It was dreadful what she must have endured at the time of the supposed suicide; and how glad she must have been when she knew he lived, and saw him again! And now the Duchess knew the secret, she could remember much in Eleanor's manner of late, that was feverish and suffering and constrained; which proved that instead of enjoying the mystery, it had been a great trial and embarrassment to her. That of itself was a *circonstance atténuante*; it showed that she had not been triumphing, in the deception practised on the Duchess and on every one else.

Her Grace was mollified. She could not, however, smile so kindly at Margaret; because she thought it was so affected of her to sob as she did when she first recognised Mr.

Stuart ; and so affected to sit now quite silent, and pale, (for her, who generally had far too much colour), contemplating David, as if he were a new picture she had bought and brought home.

But even this melted away : first, under the reflection that if the mysterious fur-merchant wished to remain incognito, he must be extremely provoked with Margaret ; (and she rather liked the idea of any body being provoked with Margaret ;) and secondly, a further thaw took place on more amiable grounds, when the Duke, laying his hand gently on her arm as she passed from the dining-room, said fondly :

“ You can’t think how pretty and how glad you looked, as I caught glimpses of you beyond the *épergne* ! It is so dear of you, feeling so much for these poor souls ; after being bored all the way home by that desperate Lady Macfarren and her companion. It covers Margaret’s indiscretion so

kindly : you can't think how obliged to you I feel."

The Duchess loved her husband ; and she also loved to be praised by him ; which, in spite of his partial indulgence, as he was of a frank blunt nature, did not occur with quite sufficient frequency to satisfy her. She was conscious that the drive with Tib and Danaë, so far from boring her, had interested her precisely in the way the Duke would least have approved, since those ladies had croaked a sort of Chough and Crow duet of information, of all they thought, knew, or suspected, of Eleanor's encouragement of Stuart ; with a running commentary of bitterness. She was conscious that it had never occurred to her, to desire to cover Margaret's indiscretion ; and she was touched by her husband saying he was obliged to her, and by the look of trust and fondness with which the words were accompanied. For the thousandth time, she made one of her

feeble little vows against coquetry. For the thousandth time, she felt—incurable as she was—the superiority of this man without beauty; without what is called charm; with only his frank high soul and singleness of heart as grappling-irons in the shifting anchorage of her love,—over all those to whom she had from time to time accorded a momentary and wavering preference. For the thousandth time she acknowledged with a secret sigh, the worth of his regard, the value of his approbation, and shame at not being more deserving of both.

She felt a wish almost to ask pardon of Margaret for her hard thoughts; especially after the latter produced a quantity of beautiful coral ornaments which she had brought with her from Naples for her spoiled little sister-in-law, and which she had been at the pains to have dived for, a second time, from the depths of a packing-case; in order to oppose that small diversion to the cloud of

anxiety and embarrassment that hung over them.

The evening passed off better than could have been expected. David Stuart, no longer checked at every turn of the conversation by the necessities of his assumed disguise, talked of Naples and its memories with Lady Margaret. He gave an animated and interesting description of the coral fisheries ; the picturesque scenes at which he had been present among the fishermen ; and the laws by which even that wild trade is protected ; making it penal to break the coral away under a period of ten years, that time may be allowed for the branches to re-form or be renewed.

They talked of ornaments in general ; of the thirst for them which has existed from the earliest times ; among savage, and civilized nations. Of diamonds and pearls, and feathers and shells, the garland of the Sybarite, the laurel wreath of the hero. Of the decorations of death in all countries ; from

the coronal of flowers round the waxen brow of a dead baby, and the lilies scattered over a maiden's hearse,—to the articles of thin beaten gold found in Etruscan tombs, which there is no doubt were a species of ornament made for that single purpose ; tomb jewellery, worked and sold to adorn unconscious corpses ; the stealing of which formed the occupation of a peculiar banditti ; robbers of death, tomb-breakers, whose adventures were woven into fiction in ancient times.

They talked of the workers of these ornaments ; and those of modern days ; of the strange chance that binds certain classes of human beings, to pass their lives in searching for or executing, luxurious ornaments which other classes are to hang about their bodies, or to fasten to their raiment. Of the temptations and hardships of the poor mechanic, and the dark sad lives of which we know little more than of the mines from which the wrought gold was first taken. Of seals,

and intaglios, and sculptured gems ; of old Sicilian or Pompeian fancies, long lost or buried, now priceless.

And the pretty Duchess listened ; trying on all her bracelets on one arm, and hanging chains of coral and gold round Eleanor's passive throat ; uttering exclamations of pleasure like a child ; or pausing, with some carved treasure in her hand, to give more earnest attention to some peculiarly curious fact, or interesting anecdote.

And she said Mr. Lindsay (she begged pardon—Mr. Stuart) had never been so agreeable ; and that she was *so* glad Margaret was arrived ; and *so* pleased with the coral she had brought ; and that really it was the most delightful day she had ever spent, and she should long remember it. And on showing some of the ornaments to Tib, in the joy of her heart, she received only the discouragement of a snorting laugh ; and the observation that it was a pity Leddy Margaret had not “ bethought herself of a cloak to cover devices,” which would have

been more useful to some folk than beads : in spite of which, she accepted for her own adornment a bull's head in coral as a broach, and thanked Lady Margaret with tolerable grace ; instantly burying it, in the deep perspective hollow formed by the meeting of the folds of her dress, after they had swept over her capacious bust.

But neither ornaments, conversation, or gifts, could have won Lady Macfarren from the apparent study of the evening paper. Fiercely she glared at it, sitting apart by the fire, as though it held in its long columns the almost interminable sum total of Eleanor's offences. Dark over all, gloomed her perturbed spirit ! To her came no healing balm, no modification of displeasure. She saw it all. It was a plot from first to last. She was not sure but Margaret was an accomplice : Margaret who sate there, unconscious of all suspicions, joyous and thankful, wrapped in dreams of the past, thinking how

they had met, who had parted so strangely ; and of the alteration in David's looks ; of his wild adventures ; of his penury and suffering in the far off land ; while every now and then, a short sob, and a smile that shone like a rainbow through momentary tears, told how extremely discomposed her spirits still were, from the events of the day.

This return at the right moment ; this theatrical discovery, so well timed even to a day, during the absence of Sir Stephen ; absent also when Mr. Lindsey arrived at the castle ; this upholding of David by the Lanarks, against the evident justice of circumstances, all combined to swell her fierce anger to madness. Her brother was a deceived husband ; they were both mocked, by this cunning girl and her base guardian, whose love for Eleanor was scarcely less evident than his scorn for those who surrounded her. Irresolution and error, struggles against temptation, good efforts

mingling with evil actions, all this was infinitely less comprehensible to Danaë than cold-blooded scheming, and direct deliberate vice.

Her brother had refused to give credit to her suspicions when she had warned him ; now he *must* hear her ; now he *must* believe. Her path seemed tangled with briars, and choked with dust ; but she would break through the briars, and lay the dust with Eleanor's tears. Crush her, divorce her, disgrace her, and choose again ! It seemed written in the red hot coals she looked at with her angry eyes, over the edge of the newspaper she held in her feverish hand.

Choose again. Oh ! how she hated Eleanor, as her memory rapidly ran over those items of offence that had accumulated since first the pale bride stood, fair and cold as a statue, in that unwelcoming home to which she paid a compulsory visit, and which she left with such unconcealed satisfaction. Her sad haughty reserve, that would not quarrel ;

that would only evade and avoid, shrink and condemn. Her want of humility at having no fortune ; her extravagance, as it seemed to Danaë, under those adverse circumstances. Her having such a sickly child as Clephane, who was in fact the cause of the disaster that ended in the death of both boys. Her having no other children ; so that Sir Stephen became evidently day by day more and more knit to the base-born handsome lad at the Lodge, whose parentage was as well known to his sister, as to his scandalized household. Her silent scorn, and silent endurance, and indifference to life or death, till the arrival of her paramour from over the seas ; the paramour she had been parted from, till matters could be safely settled ; so that he was not in danger of the law ; so that he could come, without feeling a noose round his neck ; and who now appeared with a long ridiculous romantic story, of log-cabins and

self-denial, and the pretence of being another than himself.

The evening seemed endless to Lady Macfarren, till she could get away to her own room, and commune with her own fermenting heart, without the chance of being "still." The cold dawn that broke over the Highland moors, crossed the candle-light still burning in her room. Her tall powerful figure might still have been seen, reflecting moodily, with legs crossed and arms folded on her breast, like a man in a masquerade of female drapery. Yet woman's thoughts were coursing through her mind. Before that fierce and haggard eye passed bridal groups; vague pictures; shutting out Eleanor for ever, and appointing in her stead a wife who should be a mother and a glad companion; who should have power to send Bridget Owen and her striplings back to wander with goats among the Welsh moun-

tains ; and bring heirs again to Castle Penrhyn in the direct line.

Crush her—divorce her—disgrace her ! It was written in the grey of the dawning sky, as it had been written on the red-hot coals the night before !

Till at length, rising and wrapping herself like a mountaineer on the open heather, in the folds of a shepherd's plaid ; the chilled and benumbed giantess stalked to bed.

CHAPTER IX.

DAVID INHERITS AN ESTATE.

“ Good heavens ! This is very shocking : have you read this, Mr. Stuart ? Surely it concerns you nearly. Is not Stuart of Ardlockie your cousin ? ” said the Duke of Lanark, next morning at breakfast.

“ Yes, he is my cousin. I never saw him that I can recollect. My father and his, were on bad terms.”

“ He has been killed, driving home from the Hunt. The dog-cart upset, and pitched him on his head, and he never spoke afterwards.

Are you not his heir? How strangely things turn out! This alone would have made it necessary for you to avow yourself. You will have to claim the property. It is all entailed, is it not?"

"Yes, it is all strictly entailed. It is not a very large property; but it should be riches for a man who has nothing. Poor fellow! he could not be more than two and twenty! What a fate!"

"No; just two and twenty: he came of age I recollect, when we were last in Scotland. Well, it is a shocking way of attaining good luck; but it is good luck, Stuart, and I can but congratulate you."

"Now you will not leave Scotland," said Eleanor, with a smile. "Now you will know where home is, and not make dispirited speeches to me any more."

Her manner had something of the old freedom of tenderness in it; her allusion to his words, the morning they walked to the

hill-preaching, while they were looking at Dunleath in the distance:—"My home is not here. God knows where it is!"—thrilled through his heart. He had a home now; a home! His eyes fixed themselves wistfully, dreamingly, on her face. He sighed, and averted them without answering. The Duke again addressed him:

"You will be going over to Ardlockie, I suppose? no one knows of your arrival here. Would it not be better to send to Malcolm, and let him get through that declaration as a matter of business; he is only at Carrick. We shall go to Castle Penrhyn for a couple of days, that Eleanor and Margaret may have a comfortable gossip together, and that we may all understand each other, after this little dramatic confusion; after that, I hope we shall see you for a long visit at Lanark's Lodge. I hope the misfortunes of your life are over, Stuart, and that all this is the dawn of a brighter day."

Once more the frank hand was extended ; and David Stuart comprehended all the generosity that was still endeavouring to smooth his path. He remembered that Sir Stephen had yet to learn the deception that had been practised upon him. He felt that Eleanor's return to Castle Penrhyn alone with Lady Macfarren and Tib, to make this disclosure to her husband, would have been exceedingly comfortless. He felt that there was protection in the thought of her being accompanied by Margaret and the Duke and Duchess. Who had made protection necessary ? Who had created for Eleanor a false position in her own home ?

The friends talked it over in Margaret's dressing-room. The Duke, and Margaret, and Eleanor, and the pretty Duchess, were all there ; discoursing of the strange chance, which gave the exiled man a home and a fortune, as soon as he set foot on his native soil.

“ Oh ! Margaret, are you not sorry Lady

Peebles and Lady Macfarren were with us yesterday as witnesses?" exclaimed Eleanor.

"Yes," said the Duchess eagerly, "for to-day he could have confessed himself to be Mr. Stuart, so gracefully; quite a romance you know; coming forward to claim the estate, like a hero in disguise."

"Oh! not like a hero,"—said Margaret with rather a mournful smile. "I am not sorry for the disclosure; but I am sorry it was ever made necessary. My dear Eleanor, how could you allow such a foolish deception? It ought never to have been. It was beneath him, and beneath you. Where was our good old devise, "*Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra,*" when you consented to do the honours of your husband's house, to one who was playing a part there, which you would have feared Sir Stephen's discovering?"

"David Stuart had such a morbid dread of being recognized," said Eleanor. "He

was so extremely anxious about it. I could not make him see matters in the same light that I did ; and he intended, I believe, to go away long since. He lingered on ; and things became more difficult as he staid."

"Of course they did. Falsehood is never easy, dear Eleanor ; people seize it as a shield, and it turns to a spear in their hands, to pierce the bosoms it was meant to protect. It is like one of the demon-gifts in German stories, that ruin their possessors."

"Margaret, I do not defend it. I have passed a very painful time ; but I believe women are incompetent judges of the degree of disgrace attached to men, under such circumstances as those my poor guardian involved himself in. I know he spoke of it as irretrievable. Do *you* think he was so very wrong for assuming a false name ?"—and she turned to the Duke. He smiled kindly, and paused, (for he could not be said to hesitate) before he replied.

“If ever I could think my peerless Margaret at fault in her notions of right and wrong,” said he,—“it certainly would not be on this occasion. I think Stuart erred in what he did. I have admitted as much to him. I feel for him, I comprehend his excuses, but the conduct is faulty which needs an excuse. Not even the look of your appealing eyes, shall make me say I think him right to have practised this deception. Either he should have had strength to forego the great delight (and a great delight I admit it to be—a temptation hard to be withstood) of seeing you again, of standing in your presence whom he had wronged and yet loved, a forgiven man; or, my dear Eleanor, he should have had strength to brave the shame his former rashness had incurred, and come over here as Mr. Stuart, in his own name and character. Strength to abstain, or strength to endure—either way, strength. Moral courage; without which

without which honour cannot stand the brunt of life's trials."

Again the Duchess felt, as her beautiful eyes rested on her husband, how real was his superiority. The image of the false Quebec merchant—the Lindsay of Castle Penrhyn—the guardian of Eleanor's childhood—the hero in disguise who was to take possession of Ardlockie—rose with all his advantages before her imagination ; graceful, kindly, animated, as he had been the evening before ; making, with Margaret, that pleasant and yet learned discourse, which she never could see her coral ornaments without recollecting ; talking as no one else could talk, and handsomer than any man she knew ; and yet lifted from his pedestal in her fancy, by that sentence from her husband's lips. She felt the difference ; the Duke had none of those advantages, but in one respect he stood nearer the angelic nature, that in him there was " no shadow of turning."

Not so to Eleanor ! Warped by the blind unconscious idolatry of her heart, she still thought with tender pity of that one false step ; taken, as it seemed to her, because he felt his position more bitterly and keenly, than others thought he ought to feel. She would not judge him. She shut the eyes of her soul while the shadow of his faults passed by. She had so seldom wanted protection, so often needed comfort, that tenderness seemed to her the first quality upon earth : and as for that heroism that was required of him—it might be possible, it might be impossible, she would not question it : let those practise it who could. His whole story was so strange and dreadful, that his conduct could not be judged by common rules. Poor Eleanor !

While they talked in Margaret's dressing-room, David Stuart reflected, in his own. Reflected on the strange chances which detained him in Scotland ; which made

his stay there possible and natural. There was a long agitated interval when he endeavoured, in spite of those favourable chances, to resolve to leave it. To let Ardlockie, which had thus providentially fallen to him, at all events for a series of years: to go far, as far as possible from Eleanor and her home: to nerve his soul to the lonely fate to which his own misconduct had condemned him. He endeavoured to resolve that he would leave that room simply to make a sort of farewell explanation with the frank-hearted Duke, and to state his determination to go abroad, till years should have changed much in the opinion of others, much in his own heart. He endeavoured to resolve—

Resolve! oh, willow branch, dipping in the stream, and wavering to the ripple of circumstance, and the impulse of the breeze!

He looked out on the noble view that lay

before his window, and his thoughts flew in rapid succession from Lanark's lodge to Dunleath, Ardlockie, and Castle Penrhyn. He saw the garden there, and Eleanor—visionary Eleanor—real, at any moment, while he staid in Scotland; he had but to turn the handle of the door now, and descend the stair, and quench the thirst of his soul by seeing her. How should he quench that thirst, away in the distant lands, pining in vain for the music of her voice, the touch of her gentle hand? How should he bear that silent loveless life, from which his soul had escaped as from a dreary prison, coming once more to light and warmth and the perfume of summer flowers? Life—and it Eleanor! Was it life? was it worth taking, or bearing? The very imagination of no brought the cold dew on his forehead, and a shudder through his frame. He turned hurriedly to leave the room; he must see her now—now this moment—he must feel

that all is real and possible, of constant communion and companionship. He cannot even make the preparation for that two day's journey to Ardlockie till he has calmed the cowardice of his heart, that fears to lose her.

He seeks her ; he must speak with her. Leave Scotland ! Sooner lie down and die on the heather ; sooner beg his bread in a hooting crowd, all pointing at him and mocking him, as he used to see them long ago, in evil-haunting dreams. There is but one idea on earth—Eleanor ! Let him see her ; let him be sure of that ; and for the rest—come what come may !

They talk, in Margaret's dressing-room, of strength to endure ; of strength to abstain ; but he does not hear them. They talk, in Margaret's dressing-room, of moral courage, without which honour cannot stand the brunt of life's trials ; but their conversation does not reach David Stuart.

Yet he has made his struggle of late. Anxious about many things, but anxious above all to prove to Eleanor that she need not fear him ; that his first fault wiped away, no second shall prevent him standing before her, redeemed and upright, the ideal of her youth. The flesh has sunk on his hollow cheek ; the lustre of his strange spiritual eyes grows bright, like one in a consumption. Eleanor watches him ; she thinks he looks miserably ill ; and Margaret says he has altered greatly in these eight anxious years. She has not altered : bright Margaret remains the same : no one would guess eight years had passed, who looked only upon her. Does it sound a long time to some of my younger readers ? Let them look round and see how quickly such a term can pass ; but not to all alike. To some, those years seem scarcely to make a full stop in the page of life. To others, the

space includes the volume of their destiny. With Lady Margaret there was no change ; the hours

“ Stole from the dial, and no pace perceived.”

her eye was as bright, her hair as glossy, her step as light, her laugh as cheerful, her song as clear and sweet, as when she came to undertake the duties of chaperon to Eleanor, at Aspendale. Her brother and sister-in-law welcomed her as in those days ; her aged grandmother the same ; nor in these other lives had there been any event. Nothing marked the years, unless that pretty little Euphemia was growing tall and slight, instead of round and rosy.

But oh, how different was all with Eleanor ! Into those eight years had been crowded, all that could make or mar her fate. The supposed suicide of her guardian ; her marriage ; the birth and death of her twin sons ; the death of her mother ; the know-

ledge of Bridget Owen's position in her home; the return of David Stuart; and the avowal of his real name; all had succeeded each other, swiftly and darkly, like events in a dream.

Now she was to meet her husband after an avowed falsehood. That was a thought of pain; but it was mixed with much happiness, for had not David's lot cleared to comparative sunshine? The Duke had undertaken to tell Sir Stephen the events which had taken place, and the departure of Stuart for Ardlockie; but he was forestalled. The phaeton had been once more called into requisition; and Tib, at the risk of her life, had been driven back to Castle Penhryn by the fierce female charioteer of yesterday; curbed for the first time in her spiteful sayings, by dread of the sudden lash which Danaë applied to the flanks of the horses, whenever some forcible phrase of condemnation was used.

Tib went to tell her Airle, the astounding news ; and Lady Macfarren sought her brother. As before, she found a difficulty in persuading him that Eleanor could be unfaithful to him. He even took it as a personal insult ; and with an oath, asked her if she thought it likely, that a woman who was married to him, “ was to take up with every lath-and-plaster fellow that crossed her path ? ” But he was shaken ; the proof that Eleanor had acquiesced in the deception practised with respect to David Stuart’s assumed name, did what such proofs do in all cases ; the boundary of trust was broken down.

Sir Stephen trembled with fury ; with such fury, that even his sister felt alarmed, and inwardly congratulated herself that there would be time for her athletic brother to “ cool down ” before the arrival of the party from Lanark’s Lodge. But she had raised the devil she could not lay. In vain, as she withdrew, she advised the insulted

husband to take steps quietly, to ascertain the truth of what she had told him. Sir Stephen repeated the word "truth" with a growling curse, and a blow on the table with his clenched fist. Then he unlocked his desk, and took out Eleanor's letter to him while in Wales; the letter which announced the arrival of her quondam guardian at the Castle. It was brief: there was no difficulty in finding the sentence; it stood marked out from amongst the rest, by the hesitating erasures which had been made. After stating the circumstances of Mr. Fordyce's providential interference, and prevention of David's self-slaughter; the meeting with Mr. Weston, and the recovery of her fortune; she wrote: "Mr. Lindsay, a gentleman from Mr. Stuart, is here to arrange and explain—" that had been scratched through with her pen, and over it was written:—"a Mr. Lindsay, from Quebec, is here as his representative;"—but that again had been renounced; and the

phrase at last stood :—" Mr. Stuart is represented by Mr. Lindsay, from Quebec, who is here, if you should wish to see him before he goes back to Edinburgh on his way to America."

Represented, indeed ! Monstrous hypocrisy ! monstrous insolence, and braving of his authority, as lord and master of Eleanor and his house ! All the blood in his veins beat like the stream round a mill-wheel ; he could have torn David limb from limb ; or rolled a great stone over him, as Polypheme did by the shepherd Acis. Represented ! A fierce sneer broke from him, as he crumpled up the letter in his hand, shivering with the desire to wreak vengeance somewhere, on some one, he scarcely cared who.

As he stood thus, in solitary wrath, the door of the room opened, and Eleanor herself appeared. Eleanor looking lovely, the strings of her bonnet untied, gladness and embarrassment mingling in her countenance.

She had just arrived ; she came to ask him if the Duke might come in and speak with him ; that generous, kindly friend who was to make explanations for them all. Driving through the fresh air of a Highland morning in company with the best and kindest friends she had ; all talking cheerfully of David's change of prospects ; of the safe future and the luckless past ; had given her brightness. The halo of youth and beauty was round her, but this time her beauty did not mollify her husband. The sight of her was as the sight of colours to the bull that stands chafing alone in a Spanish arena. He rushed towards her, as she made a breathless startled pause at the door ; he seized her arm with his right hand, he grasped her shoulder with his left, and he shook her as passionate nurses shake a rebellious child. Her bonnet fell off ; the long braids of her beautiful hair were loosened ; a wild, short, sharp cry escaped her ; and when he relaxed his grasp at

the sound, she staggered to the nearest chair, and dropped into it; her eyes fixed on his face with speechless amazement and horror.

One of Sir Stephen's thunder-claps of execration burst over her head, and rolled away into intelligible words. "I wonder you are not ashamed to look at me," said he fiercely, panting with anger and excitement; "I wonder you are not afraid for your life, after your conduct towards me."

"Oh!" said Eleanor, with a bitterness and desperation which did not seem to belong to her nature, and in a tone as vehement, though not so loud as his own—"I am afraid of nothing—you can only kill me!"

She closed her eyes for a moment, and Sir Stephen thought she was going to faint; but she did not; though every tinge of colour forsook her face, though even her lips became marble white, and it seemed to him at last, that a ghost, with pale brown hair and living eyes, was speaking to him. How

strangely she spoke—almost sternly ; what a tone of command and suffering she took ! “ Listen to me ; ”—she said ; and he obeyed.

“ Listen to me ! I guess exactly what has happened ; your sister has narrated to you, in her own way, and with her own commentaries, events which you were about to learn from a more friendly tongue. In agreeing to conceal from you Mr. Stuart’s real name, I did exceedingly wrong. I did that wrong out of compassion and sympathy ; to soothe a morbid sense of shame, on the part of a man whom I have regarded with affection ever since I was an orphan child, fatherless and helpless. I did not see how it could grieve or injure any living creature, that he should save himself the shame he dreaded, by continuing to bear, in my house, the name he has always borne in America. I was so glad to know that he lived, and to see him again, that I did not consider any other circumstance : I agreed to his wish at once : it did not even strike me as objectionable, till I had

to write to you. Then I was distressed by the position in which I had placed myself towards you, but I could not recede." She paused, and added hurriedly, "I have nothing else to reproach myself with; you cannot wring the gladness out of my heart that he is alive and above the ills of fortune; no violence can do that. The Duke wished to have seen you on the subject, which brought me here."

He listened, as she had desired him; he believed her. He felt that she was telling him the exact truth. His anger shifted away from her to David Stuart; shifted from her, and as she moved, he hastily assisted her to rise.

"Well," he said, "I'm sorry I was rough with you; it is a d—d business altogether, and you must allow that a fellow must be cursed cool to take that sort of thing quietly; kiss me, and let us be friends." But the

same short sharp cry broke from Eleanor, that had startled him before.

"Oh! let me go," said she with a shudder, "I am in such pain!"

"Why, what the devil ails you? are you hurt—did I hurt you? have I sprained your arm? Such cursed folly coming in here," muttered he, "braving a fellow, after what I'd just heard."

"I did not know you had heard it," said Eleanor, faintly. "Help me away, I think my arm is broken, not sprained."

"Broken! oh, d—n it, Eleanor, nonsense! Move it, let me touch it."

He passed his finger down the limb that hung by her side. It was broken; there could be no doubt about that: womens' bones are brittle, and Eleanor, though not a sylph like the little Duchess, was slightly and delicately formed. Her arm could not stand the grasp which might have proved in-

nocuous to Lady Macfarren; it was certainly fractured. Sir Stephen felt very sick.

He went to the chimney-piece and rang the bell violently.

"Ride for Dr. McNab," said he, "go the nearest way, over the hills, and d—n you, ride hard, and have him here without delay. Tell him Lady Penrhyn has broken her arm."

As the servant closed the door, he again approached his wife.

"I did not intend to hurt you," said he gloomily: "you must know of course, Eleanor, that I did not break your arm on purpose."

But Eleanor seemed transformed. She answered in a tone of wild impatience:

"Oh! what does it signify? Pray do not let us speak of it. When all's done, it's only a little agony more or less. What is a

broken arm? I've seen children bear more than that, patiently—I would not care if it were death."

And once more closing her eyes, she murmured to herself the word "Death !" and then these lines from Watts :

"The past temptations

No more shall vex us : every grief we feel

Shortens the destined number : every pulse

Beats a sharp moment of our pain away—

And the last stroke must come !"

Sir Stephen stared at her with amazement, with a sort of fear. Was she delirious? What change had come over her? At all events she would be better in her own room.

"Shall I call Lady Margaret?" said he, "or shall I help you up stairs?"

"I think I can walk now ; I do not feel so faint ; will you tell Margaret to come to my

room. Say to them—" added she after a pause—" that I slipped the steps leading to the reading-room; it will account for this accident."

CHAPTER X.

SIR STEPHEN HAS A RESTLESS NIGHT.

You can only kill me ! Was it Eleanor who had spoken these desperate words ? Was it Eleanor, whose voice echoed in his ear alternately in tones of command and of anguished defiance ? Or was it all a strange dream ?

The first time the voice we love, speaks to us in the low tone of tenderness, is an epoch in our lives ; so is the first time we hear it in accents of anger. The very sound of our own Christian name, first uttered by certain

lips, remains with us as a distinct memory. For the voice is the soul's interpreter upon earth ; we employ it, but we cannot govern it ; at times we dare not trust it. It trembles with our anger—it falters with our love—it moans the reproach we will not put into words—it betrays the fear we struggle to deny. When we have done with life and our fellow-creatures, our first exile from them, is silence. Silence, before decay. The voice is gone that we knew so well, that answered us so often. It shall answer no more. No more ! Though the world seem one great void in whose centre we stand to yearn and to listen !

Sir Stephen could not recover from the impression made by the tone in which Eleanor had spoken. He had been married to her eight years, and had rarely been absent from her ; but he had never heard her speak as she spoke this day. It was as if some great crash had broken a sweet

instrument, and jarred it into strange discord.

The phrases,—

“You can only kill me,”—“when all’s done, it’s only a little agony more or less,”—“I would not care if it were death,”—“you cannot wring the gladness out of my heart; no violence can do that,”—repeated themselves in his brain over and over again, in spite of his struggle to drive them out, in spite of glass after glass of wine at dinner, in spite of the darkness of night and the stillness of all things, when he was alone in his own room, and Eleanor was lying in hers, the dim watch-light burning, her arm splintered and carefully set, and all the busy household in bed.

“You can only kill me!”—Did he want to kill her? Did he want to do her any harm? Curses on David Stuart! ten thousand curses on him! but for him and his d—d contemptible folly, all this need not have been! Curses on women and their spite

to each other ; if Janet Macfarren had kept her tongue between her teeth for another two hours, he might, as Eleanor said, have heard the events which had so ruffled him, told in a more friendly manner. The Duke had talked them over with him since. His frank condemnation of the line pursued ; his open admission of Sir Stephen's right to be offended, as husband and host, when so strange a deception had been carried on ; did more towards pacifying and conciliating him, than hours of apologetic discourse. Had he but heard the Duke before he saw his fierce sister, Eleanor might not now be lying with a broken arm ; nor he sleepless and feverish.

For he could not rest ! In vain he thrust back the hot coverings from his broad stately chest ; in vain he rose and opened one of the windows, that he might breathe more freely ; in vain he tossed, and turned, and flung that strong right hand whose grasp

had proved so perilous, above his head which ached and throbbed as though the temple-veins would burst ; in vain he sate up and stared round him, burying his fingers in the thick masses of his tangled hair, and wondering what ailed him, and whither the common blessing of sleep had fled. The night seemed interminable ; there was something hellish in its fever and its darkness ; in the wind that flapped the heavy window-curtain and swept across the room cooling nothing, only making the shadows cast by the flickering lamp wave unsteadily on the pale wainscotting of the wall.

It was a new strange torture to him, this sleepless bed ; his healthy animal nature had no acquaintance with a suffering so well known to the habitual invalid ; he felt as if possessed by demons. Hours that seemed years, went by, and morning broke. He looked at the streaks of dawn from the open window, closed it, and drank a long deep

draught of water ; then he flung himself on the bed, and slept.

Disturbed dreams coursed one another through his mind—he started and muttered in his sleep. His hand clenched and struck out ; then he lay still for awhile, heavily slumbering ; and then again he tossed and turned, muttering familiar names and broken sentences and words.

He dreams of Eleanor, in a London ball-room, with a wreath round her head ; flushed and weary, but beautiful—how beautiful ! He vales with her, whirling round, breathless but happy ; the music stops ; they stop—what is the matter ? there is an obstacle ; a mound of earth in the midst of the ball-room ; they stumble—they fall ; his hand rests on Eleanor's corpse ; the mound is a grave ; he has fallen into it. Oh ! horror—wake !

He dreams again. He is among the Welch hills ; it is winter ; he sees a young slight girl, almost a child, standing in the snow,

poorly and simply clothed ; yet she cannot be a peasant ? No, the Welch curate's grand-daughter. The old man is there too ; with a quaint peaceful face, lit by a foolish flattered smile at the honour done him by Sir Stephen's visit ; dressed in an odd costume, something between a gardener and a parson. The dream shifts ; Sir Stephen sees a little church, where the quaint man preaches sermons in Welch, and fragments of abstruse learning come out in his preaching, like sparks in darkness. His grand-daughter is not listening ; she is looking at the rays of winter sunshine on the holly in the window ; she is thinking of a love-meeting she will hold as she goes home. The dream shifts again. The young girl is gone ; the old man with the quaint peaceful face, is alone ; he hunts for footsteps he cannot find, in the snow ; he looks down into the well, holding a light there, with a trembling hand. His grandchild has been carried off ! He goes

back into his cottage and sits down, groaning, on the old seat by the hearth; the other seat opposite is empty—empty for evermore! He preaches brief wandering foolish discourses; his scanty flock look at him with pity; they think of him, not of what he says; they watch him sadly, as he turns down the path that leads to his lonely home!

The dream is gone; another rises in its stead. The strong swimmer is in the lake at Glencarrick; he swims for life and death; the little child is on his back; wet and bewildered; he feels the touch of its small soft frightened lips, pressed coaxingly on his neck, on his shoulder; he hears its terrified cry over the waters: "Clephane! my darlin' Clephane!" he sees Clephane sinking—sinking—sinking—among reeds and a tangled network of weeds. He sinks himself; help! Frederic is drowning—help!

He wakes; this is a nightmare—this is illness. Oh, how glad he is to wake, and

shake off the great anxious horror, and sit upright, and see the sun rising beyond the hills, shining down on the solid earth !

He rings for his servant. Is Dr. McNab up yet ? Has he seen Lady Penrhyn ? When he has attended to her, let him come to Sir Stephen ; he wishes to be blooded in the arm.

And so the fever is drained away ; and the vague thirst of vengeance is quenched ; and the haunting dreams are banished ; and the sense of coolness returns ; and let who will lie awake again to-night, Sir Stephen slumbers sound, and wakes refreshed, as he has done hitherto all his life. Only in the morning, when he goes down to the Lodge to take young Owen out with him, he asks Bridget if she has heard lately from her grandfather ; and says he does not see why the boy should not go to Wales for a couple of months, to stay with the old man and cheer him.

But Bridget shakes her head. She knows

it would not cheer the weak but pious old man, to see that sturdy handsome child of shame. And Sir Stephen tells her of his restless night, and his heavy dreams, and how he would not pass such another for a king's ransom. And Bridget sighs; and wonders less at the horror of his visions than at their rarity, and owns that to her such dreams have often come,—especially the first year she spent at the Lodge. Vexing her soul with memories of innocent days, and of that quaint kind old man, who still preaches disheartened sorrowful sermons, in the little church far away, among the Welch hills where she was born.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DAGON IS PUT "EN PÉNITENCE."

ELEANOR'S arm has long been well; and she smiles at Lord Peebles' often-repeated joke, that her cousin Stephen has a woman-trap constructed near the door of his library, for pretty ladies to fall into; and that he would have a woman-trap too, but thinks it a cruel way of catching them, as it breaks their bones. And he ventures on a joke against his own gorgeous and obese Tabitha, observing that he fears if *she* had fallen into a trap, it would have required "all the king's

horses, and all the king's men" to pull her out and set her up again ; like Humpty Dumpty. And Tib is wrathful and astonished at the venturesome jest ; and she resolves to punish the little Dagon—even in his pride of place ; which she does in a variety of ways. She will not break the yolk of an egg into his tea, and stir it round with a spoonful of brandy, as she generally does ; to make it nourishing ; she says she is hurried to get her breakfast over and go out, and bids the butler do it ; and the butler cannot separate the yolk as skilful Tib does, but lets some of the white of the egg fall into the tea, and is not exact about the quantity of brandy ; and the poor little Dagon looks plaintively about him, for he thinks the tea nasty, and the congealed white of the egg disgusts him, and he is not happy till Eleanor, perceiving his plaintiveness, sets down her own cup, and pours all the ill-made tea away, and breaks an egg as dexterously as if she had been

married to a feeble Dagon all her life, and measures the spoonful of brandy so steadily in her pretty white hand, that it is a pleasure to see her ; and goes round herself, and sets it before him, with a smile and a kind word, and goes back to her place,—leaving a waft of scent from the violets she wears in her bosom, and the dried lavender in which her handkerchiefs and collars are kept, and the long silken plaits of hair that touched his little bald pate, as she stooped over him to put the cup on the table.

And the Dagon is happy, and eats his breakfast merrily ; and does not see the furious face of Tib, stopping with her mouth full of toast and butter to stare at Eleanor with amazement, and holding her food all in one cheek, like a baboon ; and he does not know that he is to be punished.

But he is uncomfortable after breakfast, when he is reading the newspaper ; for there are so many draughts of air, he can't imagine

where they all come from; and nobody thinks of shutting the doors; or drawing the great heavy Indian screen comfortably round him, or seeing that the windows really *are* all closed; for Eleanor is not there, and Tib is gone out; and at last the poor Dagon rings the bell, and tries to make the servant understand what to do; and the servant obeys orders, and moves about the things, but it does not answer; and as the Dagon gets impatient, the servant also gets impatient; and reflects that he belongs to Sir Stephen Penrhyn's establishment, and is not bound to waste his morning attending upon a little fidgetty old Lord, who is at the Castle on a visit, and whose title will one day belong to his master; so he leaves off shifting the Indian screen, and sweeps up the bright polished grate, and puts a quantity of coals on, that he may not have to return to the library for a long time; making it all very cold and uncomfortable; and then he

goes away, shutting the door very loud which Lord Peebles cannot bear, and sending a great sudden sweep of wind over him, so that he puts the warm newspaper over his ear, for fear of getting the ear-ache.

In the middle of the day he is happier ; for Eleanor asks him if he would like a turn in the garden, and she takes him out with her, and he ventures to tell her that he has taken cold in his ear, and she takes him then into the green-houses, and in the sunny part of the terrace, and so home ; and Lord Peebles is amused with his walk, and thinks Eleanor very pretty, and loves to see her draw her little white hand out of her garden-glove, to nip off a dead leaf, or hold a flower up and admire it ; and he wishes he had married early, and had had a daughter, and that the daughter had been like Eleanor.

But at dinner-time he is very wretched, for Tib keeps interfering with all he wants to eat, telling him that she will not have

him eat this, and that she "shall have him laid up again" if he eats that ; insomuch, that at last he does not know what to do, or what she expects, or whether he is to have any dinner at all ; and he drops his hands hopelessly in his lap, and turns his big signet-ring round and round his finger, utterly discouraged. Till Tib sends him the breast of a roast fowl, which he does not like, for he is fond of little made dishes, with sauces to them ; and the fowl he thinks dry and unpalatable ; it tastes as if he were gnawing the end of his own muslin cravat. And after the fowl, he is only allowed a bit of uninteresting pudding, and he feels ill and irritated, and dislikes his unenjoyable dinner.

Then, in the evening, Tib will not play at patience with him ; though Margaret is gone to sit with Eleanor, who has retired early not being well ; and the Duke is busy with plans for his water-mills ; and Sir Stephen has taken Mr. Malcolm to the smoking-room to

have a cigar ; and there is nobody to amuse him. And he tries to read an account of the Inverness Hunt, in the "Caledonian Mercury," but the lights hurt his eyes, and he does'nt know how to manage those nice little green shades that Tib puts on and lowers as the candle burns down ; and he dar'nt ask Tib, for she "gruff'd" him when he asked her to play at patience ; and he has made out somehow that she is angry with him, though he does not exactly know why. So he sits and looks at the fire ; and at the bows in his own shoes ; and he feels quite obliged to Ruellach for sauntering up from the other fire-place at the end of the library, and putting his long grey nose over the Dagon's neat little knees, to be patted and spoken to ; and he amuses himself lifting the rough wiry hair of Ruellach's shaggy eyebrows, and thinking what a kindly expression there always is in a dog's eyes. And then he thinks of Tib's eyes, and he is sorry he

married Tib ; for she is much less kind to him now than she was before they were united. And he goes to bed, a miserable little Dagon, with symptoms of flying gout, and a bad pain in his ear.

And in the morning the poor Dagon is really unwell, for he requires a great deal of care ; and the Dagoness is frightened ; for though it was her sovereign will and pleasure to torment and punish her Dagon, it would not do at all to have him really ill, and perhaps die, and she be reduced to comparative insignificance, and Eleanor be Countess of Peebles and mistress of Peebles Park, and Tib only queen of old maids. So she redoubles her care and attention ; and she sits all that day, and the next, and the next after that, with the Dagon in his own room ; and she rubs his ear with sweet oil, laudanum, and spirits of camphor ; and binds his head round, with spun Shetland flannel and a soft silk handkerchief ; and she consults

with Dr. McNab about his gout, like the tenderest of wives ; and Dr. MacNab and Mr. Malcolm are lost in admiration of Tib ; whom they pronounce to be “ just the most comfortable body about a sick person, that the heart o’ man could desire ; ” and the Dagon revokes and reverses the sentiments that had floated through his rebellious mind while he was patting Ruellach the night before ; and he is glad that he married Tib ; for nobody ever nursed him as well as she contrives to do ; and he feels thankful to Tib, and fond of her, and very happy again ; though his foot is hot and throbbing with gout, and his ear is deaf and aching. And he does not know that yesterday was a day of purposely prepared rack and thumbscrew whereby he was justly tortured for his guilt in jesting about Tib’s avoirdupoise-weight ; but he knows how he missed her all day, and how essential she is to his very existence. And he quite falls into Tib’s view of the

cause of his illness, which she attributes to wandering in and out of the green-houses with Eleanor, undergoing sudden changes of temperature by being first in the open air, and then in those warm glazed galleries ; and he thanks Tib for pointing out the folly of such proceedings, and promises to be more careful in future.

And Tib rises out of that little domestic struggle, covered with glory and crowned with respect ; her price so infinitely beyond rubies, that “ invaluable ” is the only term that can be applied to her ; and accordingly Dr. McNab, Mr. Malcolm, and the poor little suffering feverish Dagon himself, unanimously agree that she is invaluable ; and the slight rustle of her voluminous silk gown, as she moves across the room to fetch the bottle of colchicum, with the soft slow heavy tread of the elephant, is music to her Dagon’s ears.

For people are too apt to think,—especially

young folks, and those that be simple,—that there are no well-assorted unions in this pairing world, but what are termed love-matches ; whereas there be pomp-matches ; and gout-matches, and all sorts of matches ; that serve to light the torch of Hymen. For the torch of Hymen (Heaven bless him, as loyal persons say of a throned monarch) sometimes burns with a very lambent flame.

Eleanor Penrhyn's idea of happiness, was a love-match ; such as she had thought to make in her girlish days with her guardian, Mr. David Stuart ; but Lord Peebles' idea of happiness, was a gout-match ; and he had realised his idea of happiness ; which Eleanor had not, for she had a husband who swore at her, and kept a mistress, and broke her arm. Therefore, by the induction of success, (which is the world's great test and touch-stone) Lord Peebles made the wiser choice of the two.

But Eleanor still believed in the dream of her youth. That world which was to teach her worldly wisdom—

“Had taught her nothing : where she erred, she errs.”

Still she believed that poverty would have been light with a companion she could have loved ; and that she could have given him joyous welcome at the threshold of a humble home. Still she looked back to the days when all this was possible ; looked back—because she dared not look forward.

She thought of Ardlockie now, as she had thought of Dunleath : it was not lovely, like Dunleath ; but the waste and stretch of its purple moors, its barren hills with grey solemn stones scattered over their sides, its little black tarns where no boats lay, as on the blue lake at Glencarrick,—were all surrounded, for her, with a halo of sacred light. There was paradise—for there was David Stuart ! And at the gate of that

barren paradise, stood Duty,—like the angel with the flaming sword.

She did not see him often ; for Sir Stephen's manner since the day of the discovery of his real name, had been sullen, fierce, and uncourteous ; in spite of the Duke's friendly explanations ; and David himself held aloof, for Eleanor's sake. But what she did see of him, was happiness ; what she did see of him, was clothed with the poet's blessing :

“ *Benedetto sia 'l giorno, e 'l mese, e l' anno,
E la stagione, e 'l tempo, e l' ora, e 'l punto,
E 'l bel paese, e 'l loco.*”

What she did see of him, made her hope to live, and fear to die ; in spite of the wild, despairing speech wrung from her by bodily and mental pain, the day she said to her husband, “ you can only kill me !”

The little bower-room was again the scene of constant occupation ; she drew, she wrote,

she planned ; and when he came, they talked over all she was interested in, for happy hours. When he came ! Eleanor was conscious that she had begun to divide time into the days that she saw the guardian of her youth, and the blank intervals between those days. And David Stuart was conscious that his division of time exactly corresponded with this method.

CHAPTER XII.

A CRISIS.

THE company were all gone : bright Margaret, and the pretty Duchess, the friendly Duke, the Dagon, and his lofty Dagoness. There was no one left but Lady Macfarren and Mr. Malcolm ; and now and then Mr. Stuart came over from Ardlockie.

Sometimes, when David came, Eleanor and he rode together. Sometimes, but rarely, he remained for a night at the Castle. If Sir Stephen was in a good humour, or was dull

and wanted a companion ; wanted stories of the backwood Indians, and moose huntings, and wild adventures ; he would ask him to stay. And now and then, the snowy weather without—or the fever that burned within—the physical impossibility of setting forth without causing all the household to wonder, at the foolhardiness of the guest and the inhospitality of the host ; or the moral impossibility of resisting the temptation of seeing Eleanor a few hours more, of hearing her voice say good night, and good morrow ; made David willing to stay. But for the most part, he shrank from it : shrank from the invitation of the man he had grown to loathe : (though he still knew nothing of Bridget Owen, or the real history of the broken arm) shrank from the shelter of the roof where he never slept ; where he only watched the stars out, as they faded over the opposite tower that held Eleanor's room !

And Eleanor never pressed him to stay.

To her, too, it was repugnant that her husband should offer him a sullen hospitality; to her, too, the knowledge that he was resting under the same roof, brought only a vague and feverish discomfort.

She thought of the first happy day and evening when he had returned from America, and she had welcomed him with her whole heart and soul; with the frankest trust; with unbounded joy; how she woke, the morning after that blessed meeting, her eyes still heavy with happy tears; and smiled to think they were together again; to meet at breakfast as at Aspendale; to sleep and wake in one home.

It was no joy now! Her thoughts did not rest with him now, as though earth's boundary were the circle round the house which harboured him. They roamed away from Eleanor's home, to his. To the unseen chambers of Ardlockie — where he read, and thought, and slept, and woke, and lived — alone! To that simple Highland

shooting lodge, which Eleanor would rather have called "home," than the proudest palace that ever was built : which could not be her home : which she might live to see some other happier creature than herself—some one free to make a choice, and beg Heaven's blessing on it—call home ; and dwell in unmolested ! Oh ! would any one ever love him half as well as she had done ? Would he love some one else ? And the shudder of a vain vague jealousy came over Eleanor's heart ; as she too, sat and watched the stars. Those serene worlds,—to whose abiding light the eyes of millions of generations have been lifted, in fever sickness and pain—in love, and the passion of prayer—and which yet shine on, changeless and pure, as when shepherds beheld the new glory amongst them, which told that our earth was redeemed.

Need had the world of the promise of that light ! Need of great mercy and help !

The struggle went on in those two hearts :

in Eleanor's, to bear life's pain, believing happiness impossible : in David's, to bear life's pain believing happiness possible ; though a sin. In which belief he erred—for we cannot steal happiness ; it must be Heaven's free gift, and those who would take it by storm, grasp but its counterfeit. The personal conviction of this, weighs heaviest on those who have most elements of good in them. You cannot question them of their experience ; for shame and silence stand sentinel over the past ; but if they dared, and if they would, they could tell you how they seized the golden cup, and drained it, and set it down with a sigh ; finding the draught bitterness—the cup of dross—the thirst for happiness still unquenched ; and, lo !—heavy in the dregs — remorse and a sorrowful regret !

The golden cup glittered now, on the edge of that cloud which hides the world of illusions : that cloud through which we pass as

through morning mists on the mountain side, not seeing what lies beyond. And sometimes the roar of the waterfall startles us, or a precipice frowns near at hand, or we have a glimpse of some fearful abyss, and we pause and hesitate, and the pulse of our heart is quickened by fear; and then we think we may still find a track to lead us whither we desire to go, and we strike onwards.

Onwards !

It was a wild snowy day when David rested for the last time under the shadow of Sir Stephen Penrhyn's roof. The morning was clear and bright, and the sun shone with a rose-coloured reflection on whitened hills and frozen streams and bare leaden branches, as he and Eleanor rode forth. Some of the trees had yet their raiment of leaves, for the winter storms and rain had not beat them. The wide spreading beeches in the park drive, supported on their red foliage, drifts of the

half melted snow,—crumbling into powder when a bird lighted on the bough, or dropping gradually in soft patches to the ground. The great heavy drooping firs stretched their arms, clothed in festoons of dark green drapery, over the sheeted earth. Stillness reigned around : stillness so complete, that the sound of the horses' hoofs on the crisp snowy road, seemed muffled and unnatural, as though they had been galloping through a dumb world ; where answering echoes, and the moan of winds, and the song of birds, and the passage of living things, were altogether unknown.

Eleanor and David rode along, talking cheerily enough of his future ; of changes he meant to make in the place at Ardlockie ; of visits he had been asked to pay, but which he wished to put off, till the nine day's wonder of his miraculous escape and return, should have faded out of the minds of his neighbours. His inheritance of Ardlockie was

more than property to him ; it was reputation. The world is an odd world, and David had never lived much in it, but he knew enough of it to know, since its indulgence is always based upon accident, how favourable to him was the hazard of the die ! He knew that the possessor of Ardlockie, befriended and apparently esteemed, (at all events directly countenanced) by the Duke and Duchess of Lanark, and by his own former ward ; stood in a very different position from penniless David Stuart, hiding in America from the sneers and condemnation his unlucky speculations had entailed upon him. He knew how differently the same story could be told ; black and miserable as the first part of that story must always be ; how easily the bitterest of the blame could be shifted, from the speculating guardian who had risked Miss Raymond's fortune, to the bankrupt firm who had had the use of her money. How even the suicide which in his weakness

he had contemplated, could be made to take the turn of romance, and the desperation of honour ; now that it suited people *not* to degrade or condemn him. He felt that the load of overhanging disgrace, which had seemed to him so dark—so imminent—so perpetual—to avoid the public evidence of which, he had on his first arrival in Scotland risked Eleanor's comfort in her own home, and dared the daily chance of detection as an impostor—was a horror which could be lifted off, like the oppression of some shocking dream. Life wore once more for him the aspect it usually wears for those who have not yet reached middle age. The terrible past had formerly swallowed up the future ; but now, the future preponderated over the past.

They talked then, of hopeful plans ; and if now and then a secret sigh of bitterness woke in David's heart, or some dark thought flitted like a raven's wing across Eleanor's

mind, yet the hour was a happy one. They were together ! To those who have been parted, and who admit no further possibility among the blessed chances of life than that of reunion, to be together is happiness enough.

As they rode gently along ; talking eagerly, smiling at each other in that winter's sunshine, no one could have guessed how dark had been the storms of the past—nor how near was the storm of the future !

Eleanor was already speaking sentences of farewell, for they were near the Lodge gate, and she had only come "to see him on his way." They drew up their horses and waited for some one to come down from the Lodge. The inmates seemed always to have a pleasure in the petty disrespect of making Eleanor wait. She patted her horse's neck, and averted her eyes from the pretty cottage, whose adornment seemed to be the ceaseless occupation of some one of the gardeners,

for even now, Sandy was there, lifting away the basin of a stone fountain which the frost had cracked, and in which, during the summer time, Bridget kept gold fish to amuse her children. Young Owen was there, watching with boyish interest the proceedings of Sandy. David called out to him :

“ Come down, you lazy little fellow, and open the gate, will you ? ”

The boy turned sharply round :

“ I’m not gatekeeper ! ”

“ Some of you keep it, I suppose,” said David, impatiently.

The door of the Lodge opened, and Bridget tossed the key to Sandy ; but the old man’s hands were occupied, for he had just taken up a portion of the stonework which supported the fountain. Young Owen snatched the key, and running half-way down the path, flung it into the road, exclaiming :

“ Open the gate for yourself, my fine Laird o’ Ardlockie ! ”

The key struck the forefoot of Eleanor's horse, as it stood pawing the snow, impatient of the delay, and the startled animal suddenly swerved—then reared bolt upright—reared again ;—and, in a moment more, would have started off, fleet as the wind, but for David's dexterity in catching the rein.

"Get down !" said he in a choked voice, "let me help you down ; my God ! that your life should be endangered by such a will o' the wisp as that !"

For an instant he stood looking at her, as the groom rode up and took her horse and his own. Then, turning angrily to little Owen :

"You deserve a good horse-whipping," said he indignantly.

The lad laughed.

"Maybe you'll give it me," retorted he.

"As well I, as another !" and David made an angry stride up the path ; not hearing or heeding Eleanor, who with hands clasped

over her eyes, and in a smothered voice, exclaimed :

“ Oh ! don’t strike him ! for Heaven’s sake take care what you do ! I am as sure as I am of my existence, that that boy—” but what she was sure of, she could not utter.

The handsome dauntless lad, stirred not an inch as David came forward to seize him ; he coloured violently, and lifted his bold beautiful black eyes to the whip which was held menacingly over his head.

“ Beg pardon for frightening the lady, you mischievous imp, or I’ll flog you this minute ; you must be broken of such tricks as these.”

“ Flog away !” said the boy ; trembling more as it seemed, with anger and defiance, than with fear ; then in a loud voice, “ Mammy,” he cried, “ run down the road and meet Sir Stephen—he was coming up but now—and tell him the Laird o’ Ardlockie has hold o’ me.”

Bridget Owen came out of her Lodge, as a young she-panther might have rushed out of its den ; as supple, as graceful, and almost as fierce, she sprang forward, flung her arms round the boy, and stood confronting David ; her lovely passionate eyes flashing with fury, her nostrils dilated, her short upper lip quivering over the even white teeth below, as though it had a separate life of its own. She was a perfect picture ; and as David looked at her in amazement, a dim notion of some sort of link between the beauty of animal and human life, flashed through his brain ; while Sandy whispered him :

“ Oh ! Sir, have a care, ye dinna ken a’—” while Bridget turned and called scornfully to Eleanor, down in the road.

“ How could you let him beat my boy ?” she said ; “ I was sorry for your’s !”

But Eleanor only hid her face in her

hands, and shuddered ; and at the same instant, before David could move to rejoin her, the dog-cart was driven at full speed to the spot ; the horse checked with such suddenness, as to throw him on his haunches, and scatter the snow and earth up the bank where they stood ; and Sir Stephen leaped into the road, and advanced into the centre of the agitated group.

“What the — is all this ?” shouted he.

“What are you at ? What has happened ?”

“It’s the new Laird wants to horsewhip me,” said young Owen.

“You meddled with the boy ? — *you* meddled with the boy !”

Sir Stephen seemed incapable of uttering another word.

“The boy flung the key at Lady Penrhyn’s horse,” began David.

“Sir,” said the master of Castle Penrhyn, with a fierce oath, “I don’t care a curse what

your reasons were for meddling with him ; I say he shant be meddled with ; d—n you !” and Sir Stephen looked livid with rage.

David’s heart swelled with defiance ; he glanced down towards Eleanor, who was leaning against the stonework of the gate.

“ If the son of your lodge-keeper—” but he was again interrupted ; interrupted by Bridget.

“ Oh !” said she, with wild impatience, “ the boy has better blood in his veins than yours will boast—match with who you may. Speak up for your own,” added she, looking towards Sir Stephen, and pressing her hands against her temples as if the beating of their pulses made her dizzy. “ Speak up for your own ! I declare to the Lord, I could leave you to-morrow, though I broke my heart on the hills, if I thought you’d see him struck by any stranger of them all ! This comes of our living here as we do, to be at every one’s back and bend ; like servants and slaves !”

and the angry tears burst at last from Bridget's eyes, and quenched their hot light ; her voice broke down in sobs ; and with a strange but graceful gesture she swung her hand back, and pointed without turning to the desecrated lodge where she thought it a degradation to dwell ; but which certainly looked as little like the abode of a servant on the estate, as it well could.

Her tears fell like oil on fire, in Sir Stephen's heart. He laid his hand on the boy's shoulder, and taking one fierce step nearer David, he said with a fresh oath,—

“Sir, this boy is mine ! Mine!” he repeated with vehemence, glancing towards Eleanor as if he defied even her presence in the confession,—“I won't have him meddled with, either by milady, or by you, or by any other lady or gentleman ; curse me if I will ! If she don't like him at the lodge, by —, I'll put him in the castle ; if she don't like him at her horse's heels, I'll put

him by her side at table. S'blood, am I master of Castle Penrhyn, or are you? Things have gone on here in a strange way since you dropped amongst us, and my patience is come to a halt, Sir. My house is mine—my wife is mine—and this boy is mine; we don't want you to govern us, and curse me if *I* wish ever to see you on this side the gate again."

He paused, and looking round, put the boy from him.

"Go in now with your mother, and come up at dinner-time to the Castle; bring your things; come for good; come to live there, do you understand? Go in, Bridget."

He stepped down into the road.

"Wish Mr. Stuart good bye, Eleanor," he said.

She held out her cold hand, and looked vaguely in his face.

"You do not seem very fit for riding; get

into the dog-cart, I'll drive you home myself."

He lifted her in, touched his hat sullenly to David, and drove away.

And then old Sandy, to whom the groom had entrusted David's horse, unlocked the gate; and keeping the reins over his arms walked through the wood by David Stuart's side; and as they walked, told him all that had been known for years at the Castle; all that Eleanor herself had known for years, but had never spoken of, respecting Bridget Owen and her children.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION.

TRUE to the angry determination he had announced, Sir Stephen entered the dining-room with young Owen, and placed him by his side at table. He was a fearless lad, for the great glare of Janet Macfarren's eyes alarmed him no more than a bonfire on Guy Fawkes day. No one else spoke. Mr. Malcolm looked sorrowfully at Eleanor : but she did not see him.

"Take a glass of wine with us, Malcolm,"

said Sir Stephen. "Take a glass of wine, Owen. We'll see who'll gainsay you, stranger or friend: take a glass of wine, and let us drink to a better store of patience in the next gentleman who horsewhips you, and the next time my lady looks on."

All dinner time, with a fierce sneering laugh, he looked at Eleanor and made these sort of speeches; patting the handsome insolent boy on the shoulder; flushed with wine and triumph. And Eleanor bore it; till once when Owen turned and smiled at his father, the gleam of likeness in his smile to little Frederick, struck her again, as it had done that day at the Lodge. Her soul was shaken at the sight: the pale ghosts of her own lost children stood up between her and that offspring of her husband's sin. By some strange working of a mother's heart, it did not embitter her more. Her dear ones were gone—and this was his, and he loved it! Her eyes softened and filled with

tears; she looked kindly at the boy; who with some embarrassment, pushed a dish of sweetmeats towards her, and shrunk back to his father's side. Eleanor sobbed aloud.

"Oh! d—n it," said her husband, "if you're going to cry, you'd better go to your own room. No crying will alter what I've determined upon; if that's what you want. I'll be master in my own house, though all the lairds in Scotland set their faces against it: d—n me if I wont. Go to your own room—you're tired; to-morrow you'll take things more coolly. D—n it, Janet, do you mean to sit here, and drink healths with the men?"—added he, with excessive irritation, as he saw that though Eleanor obeyed his mandate and was leaving the room, his sister sat sullenly staring at young Owen.

Lady Macfarren rose, saying:

"'Deed, then, it's the last day you'll see me at your table, to eat or to drink either, if

this is the company you mean to keep at the Castle."

She followed Eleanor, and as the latter opened the door of the bower-room, and paused at its threshold, she said with a fierce sneer :

"Ye may thank yourself for what's come to pass this day, Leddy Penrhyn: if it's a disgrace to see a man make a servant's hall of his own dining-room, it's a disgrace to see any woman, that calls herself a wife, behave as you have done to my brother—in the matter of Stuart, and in all other matters."

"Lady Macfarren!" said Eleanor, haughtily, "while I call this house my home, I will thank you to remember that this is my private sitting-room, and that I am not compelled to submit to your unauthorised intrusion: still less to your comments on my motives or actions."

She closed the door.

"Ah! my fine lady, your pride shall have a fall, or I'm not mistress of Glencarrick," thought the mailed sister-in-law, as she retreated down the corridor to her own apartment.

While I call this house home! Was Eleanor thinking of leaving it?

Many thoughts chased each other through that miserable wife's mind; but uppermost and strongest of all, was the thought that henceforth she and her guardian were for ever parted. He could never come to Castle Penrhyn more—that was impossible. She had heard her husband's words,—“Curse me if I ever wish to see you on this side the gate again.” All was over—companionship, hope, joy, all was at an end! In the morning, when they talked of his prospects, they foresaw no unknitting of the bond of their friendship: in that vague future of which they had spoken, they saw themselves together: not always, not more than they had

been lately ; but together from time to time. Now, what time would bring their meeting ? Now, what event could build up the hope that lay crashed in ruin ?

All of a sudden, there rushed over Eleanor's heart that wild torrent of regret, that seems, when it comes, as if the very flood gates of passion were broken down. The waters went over her soul and whelmed it. She could not part with David Stuart ; she could not live in that mockery of a home ; she could not face the life of desert days before her. She was the wedded wife of Sir Stephen Penrhyn, of Penrhyn Castle : she knew that : but she desired to be where David was. Yea, though it were but as an unseen spirit haunting the habitation where he dwelt : though it were only to watch him entering and departing day by day, without notice or consciousness on his part ! She was in that state of mind which seems delirium to others, who are able to judge calmly—which

seems delirium to ourselves, it may be, in after times. The watchword of her soul, was the one breathless word which summed the wishes of Mignon, in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, when the feverish canker-worm of love eat into her life—

Thither ! She cared not where—or how—or what lay beyond ; but thither where he was : with him—with *him* !

She looked out into the night. The snow lay over the earth in one unbroken sheet, reaching from her home to his,—over the silent hills and frozen streams. The clear stars shone down from heaven, over her home and his, and millions of homes besides. All was so still—so still—and Eleanor's heart and eyes so wild !

The silence was broken. Sandy came to the bower-room with a letter in his hand. She could not doubt who the letter was from. She pressed her lips to the seal before she

opened it. Her cheek flushed to the deepest hectic while she read it.

“Eleanor,” it said—“after what I witnessed and heard to-day, I feel that I have a right to counsel you, and that I can scarcely accuse myself of selfishness in the counsel I shall give, though my whole future will be coloured by your answer.

“If there were no redress possible for wrongs like yours—even then, I think you would be justified in withdrawing from the scenes where you must have suffered so much. Oh! why did you never feel confidence enough in me to speak of this? But there is—there must be—possible redress! In England it might be otherwise: in England your husband might heap what insult he pleased upon you—might bring that Welchwoman and her brood into your very house—and, beyond the half-measure of being allowed to live separate from him, the

law would do nothing for you ; it would not divorce you ; it would not enable you to be free for ever of the man who could so mock the tie that binds you both ; it would not enable you to make some other choice ; to exchange oppression and insult, for protection and love. You might appeal to justice in vain.

“ In Scotland, this is different. By the Scotch law, the sin of the man is held as valid a reason for breaking a marriage, as the sin of the woman. By the Scotch law, you could be set free at once : free as you were in those blessed days at Aspendale, when my betrayal of the trust reposed in me, condemned you to this fate.

“ It will be necessary to prove yours a Scotch marriage ; and this will turn on legal points. You were married in Scotland ; you resided there ; except when your husband’s parliamentary duties obliged him to be in London. He is a Scotchman. It seems to

me that this is a case in which there will be no difficulty ; but it is one on which you will require the best legal advice, in order to know how to proceed with the least delay.

“ Go to England—to London. I enclose you the address of a lawyer of eminence there, who will arrange everything for the best, and will take the Edinburgh opinions on all that has passed. There is nothing that is not capable of the clearest proof. I can see but one termination to the struggle ; (if, indeed, there be any opposition to the dissolution of this most unhappy marriage) —your freedom, and a happier future.

“ Of that future, I will not trust myself to speak. I solemnly promise, if you will let me know that you abide by my counsel this day, never to see you—never to attempt even to breathe the air of the same place where you may dwell—till you are no longer the wife of Sir Stephen Penrhyn ! You will write to me ; and for all the guidance and support

that your position in the meanwhile will require, you may trust the friend to whose legal advice I refer you.

"If your answer be 'yes,' send Sandy back, and I will make every arrangement for your journey. If no—

"Eleanor, I cannot contemplate any other answer—I expect that—I wait for it!

"D. S."

"Go back to Ardlockie," said Eleanor, in a low trembling tone, "and tell Mr. Stuart my answer is 'yes.' You will return here and go with me to-morrow. I will be ready by twelve o'clock."

The night was passed in preparation for a journey; a journey that was to have no return. In hurried sortings of papers and letters, and weary packings, and sitting with clasped hands in fits of feverish thought. When Sir Stephen went out shooting in the morning, Eleanor departed. The day was

bright and still, like that which had preceded it. As the carriage rolled from the door, the horse's feet beat with the same muffled sound on the snowy road that led out of the park; the gay chrysanthemums in the lodge-garden, stood up in the frosty air like flowers moulded in brilliant tinted wax; not a leaf seemed to have fallen, since Eleanor's eyes had rested on their stirless boughs the day before. The very snowdrifts on the palings, and on trunks of lopped trees, seemed scarcely to have altered in form. Pure, silent, and changeless, was the external aspect of nature. Pure, silent, and changeless! And on such a day, in the clear winter sunshine, Eleanor saw for the last time, the great grey stone entrance and iron gates, the decorated Lodge, and the familiar windings of the road which had led to the threshold of her home.

The frozen stillness without, seemed but a mockery of the hot war that went on in her

heart ; for in that shining voiceless hour, she left home and her husband for ever ! Dreaming, with feverish terror, of the law-struggles and explanations with strangers, respecting events on which she had scarcely dared commune with her own soul ; dreaming, with wild visionary joy, of a future of freedom and peace, which should repay her for all she had suffered.

When Sir Stephen returned from shooting with little Owen, he opened the door of the bower-room ; but Eleanor was not there. He sought her in the drawing-room, and in her own room, whistling as he went down the long corridors where his children used to run to and fro. He stopped whistling suddenly, for he thought of Frederick ; and then he considered how Eleanor would receive what he was going to say. He was going to make a sort of sullen explanation, and endeavour to get her to countenance young Owen's stay at the Castle at intervals,

and he would send him meanwhile to school. As he returned down the passage, Lady Macfarren met him.

"Eleanor is gone," said she.

"Gone!"

"She is gone; I do not know if she is gone alone."

"Alone! what do you mean? d--n it, what do you mean?"

"You never would believe me. She is gone, and I have no doubt Stuart is gone too."

"Stuart!"

There was murder in the clenching of his hand—in the glare of his eye.

He sent one of his gillies to know if the Laird of Ardlockie was at his place. He never spoke, during the hours that intervened till the man returned. They were then sitting round the fire, after their silent sullen dinner. In spite of himself, Sir Stephen's eye had glanced perpetually to Eleanor's

empty place. She had abandoned him and her home! Oh, even if unbeloved, it was a smiting, dreary, oppressive sensation, so to lose her!

The messenger returned—the Laird was at his own house—it was with something of triumph, even then, that Sir Stephen told his sister that she was “out” in her expectations as to Eleanor’s guilt. But she was gone. Where? Was it for ever? Or was it only to brave Sir Stephen into retracting the insult he had offered her, by bringing young Owen into his house?

Sir Stephen spoke to Mr. Malcolm; (he spoke twice before he was heard; so absorbed was the gentle Tibbite, in something he had found in the newspaper).

“You shall go and make out what all this means; where Lady Penrhyn is gone, and what the — she is up to. There is nothing to prevent your setting out immediately.”

“ I’d be glad, Sir Stephen, to be stairtin’ this minute !”

And the lank melancholy man rose, with more energy than any one had ever seen him exhibit ; as if he had only to walk to the door, and out of it, and stride over the hills in quest of Eleanor.

Some directions were given by Sir Stephen ; horses were ordered, and Mr. Malcolm was off. The master of the house remained alone with his fierce sister. Her thoughts were full of renewed hopes of getting rid of Eleanor ; of a new marriage for her brother ; she thought of the possibility of Lady Margaret’s accepting him ; that blooming creature—the sister of the Duke of Lanark—the mistress of Dunleath ; she thought of others, among the unmarried whom she knew. She never doubted that Stuart would join Eleanor, if he were not already gone ; but she dared not say so to

her brother. She dared say nothing more, she that had dared so much all her life long : she felt fiercely triumphant and hopeful ; but his countenance was too terrible for conversation.

Sir Stephen looked at little Owen ; he had carried his defiance of Eleanor too far in bringing him here. He would send him to school again, when Eleanor returned.

When Eleanor returned !

CHAPTER XIV.

ELEANOR DREAMS OF FREEDOM.

ALONE—quite alone—in London lodgings, at midnight; the table covered with letters and papers and legal opinions, Eleanor Penrhyn sate, considering.

Open on her knee lay a book—Ferguson's "Law of Divorce"—with the leaves folded down at such cases as the lawyer who was employed for her, thought fair precedents, and examples of the decision that she might expect. Everything had been done that could be done, and done with promptitude—that

last, and least common, of lawyer virtues. Her legal adviser was to see her again in the morning, and held out the most sanguine hopes that her bitter marriage-bonds might be soon and easily broken. Meanwhile, she was to read over the papers he left, and the cases he had marked.

But Eleanor was reading nothing. Her eyes were fixed on vacancy, with a set mournful stare; her mind full of sorrowful repentant reflections. Old memories and haunting thoughts oppressed her; words spoken long ago, returned to her; sounding, in the silence of that night, like dreary echoes. Mr. Fordyce advising her, as a little child. She could not tell why the recollection of that pious kind old man should be more present with her now, than at another time. "Never do any act in life, on which you dare not first ask God's blessing:" she remembered his voice repeating that sentence, as if she had heard

it yesterday ; she had often thought of it since ; she had often asked God's blessing on what she was about to do—could she ask it now ? Wronged as she had been, was what she was doing, in reality an appeal to justice, or a desperate yielding to temptation ? In her secret heart, the answer was made with a shudder. One of the first questions the lawyer had asked her, was how she had made the discovery of Bridget Owen's position, and whether her leaving home followed immediately on that knowledge ? No ; Eleanor had known the fact some time. How long ? She had known it for months—for years ; she had known, or at least believed it, for five or six years ; she had been certain of it,—for nearly two years,—ever since she heard her husband talking to Bridget.

This she had admitted to the lawyer who questioned her for the case he was preparing. She could not forget the look of astonishment

in his clever countenance, as she gave those hesitating answers ; nor the pause he made, as if reflecting ; nor the keen intelligence of his eyes, when lifting them once more to her face, he asked:—" Was Mr. Stuart equally aware with yourself of the causes of complaint, you had against Sir Stephen ?"—nor the burning blush which accompanied her own faltering " No ;"—nor the momentary silence which followed ; during which the lawyer did not look at her, but turned over the papers on the table ; and then questioned her in quite a different tone, and on another branch of the subject, as though he were satisfied, and had given her time to recover herself.

No, it was not her husband's sin that had brought about this separation ; it was the visionary sin of her own love ; the desire to swear at the altar of God to be true to David Stuart till death,—that prompted her to plan the breaking of her first vow.

" Till death do us part !" how repeat those

words to one man ; having already taken God's name in vain, as witness to their solemn binding force when spoken to another ? What was the marriage-vow but a mockery, if the oath God witnessed, could be absolved by men ? if the dread sentence, " What God hath joined, let no man put asunder," were to be nothing but a form of words, and part of an unmeaning ceremony ?

What, if after all the scandal, the exposure, the publishing of home miseries to the world, she should fail ; and remain after all Sir Stephen Penrhyn's wife ?—But the lawyer had assured her she could not fail ; that if her marriage could be proved a Scotch marriage, she was as sure of freedom, as of the light of day.

What if she succeeded ? What if the great holy bond being cancelled like an apprentice's indenture, and God's witnessing made subject to man's law, she stood free to

choose again; free to abide by her early, her only choice; would it indeed be the happiness she hoped for? Would David Stuart himself not think of her as a sinful creature, whose wild love overbore all the influences of religion, all the boundaries of duty? Would *his* love stand the test? She remembered how passionately enamoured of her, her husband had seemed to be, and how soon that love vanished; leaving the dregs of a fitful admiration which made her almost loathe her own beauty, as the only attraction she possessed for him. What if all men's love vanished so, in the security of wedded life?

She knew David Stuart's heart cast in a gentler mould; she knew she was sure of his pity, of his tenderness; that he never could maltreat her; but his love; real love—the only love that was worth inspiring—the only love that could endure—the love wherein all things are pure, all things are holy—for which Heaven's blessing could be

asked, and Heaven's blessing granted—would that be hers? would he—*could* he, give her that, under the circumstances?

In the early girlish days, he had not thought of her; not at least, with love; not as a bride; not as the inseparable companion of the onward years: it was she who had loved him. She went beyond him then: what if she went beyond him now? what if his love now, were but a feverish compound of compassion, surprise, and admiration, and the haunting knowledge that she had idolized him in youth? what if it seemed to him hereafter, but a painful dream,—that he had paid for her rescue from an evil destiny, with the forfeit of his own free-will and free affections? Oh, miserable fate! oh, fate ten thousand times worse than never to look upon him again! To be a curse, instead of a blessing; to be the cloud between his soul and happiness!

Eleanor clasped her hands on the open

pages of that useless book, in a paroxysm of despair. Many nights had passed since she left Scotland, and day by day some portion of the energy of hope had forsaken her. Having to talk over her dearest interests, her most sacred feelings, her secret wrongs, with an utter stranger; humbled and revolted her, however kindly and skilfully the gentleman to whom those interests were intrusted, endeavoured to fulfil his task. Being alone, was inexpressibly dreary and awful. She had never been utterly alone before. There was something fearful in her very liberty; in leaving and returning to the lodgings provided for her; where no familiar face except Sandy's, ever greeted, or could greet her; where the door opened without a welcome, and closed with an alien sound; no longer the door of home—home, however miserable, still sacred—still HOME, which no other house could ever be!

The night crept wearily on; the long line

of lamps twinkled down the street ; where the roll of carriages, and the pacing of foot-passengers, became less and less frequent as the slow hours waned. In that street, at that hour of apparent stillness, how many wakeful hearts might be enduring a like measure of anxiety ! In one house perhaps, a mother singing hymns to a dying child ; in another, a gambler staking his last throw ; in a third, lovers passionately murmuring words that drop like fire where they fall ; in a fourth, the dull happy oblivion of dreamless sleep ; in a fifth, toil going on till daylight !

Eleanor felt so weary, so incapable of mastering the distasteful study of Ferguson's precedents, that she rose with the intention of retiring to rest. As she gathered the papers together, to lock them in her desk, she perceived that there were still two letters she had not opened. They had been brought to her, while her lawyer was explaining and

discussing ; and after he went, her thoughts had wandered so far into the unreal, that she had forgotten them. She opened them now. One was from Mr. Malcolm, who had had some difficulty in finding her address, entreating to be allowed an interview with her. The other was from Margaret. She opened that eagerly ; there must be comfort in a letter from Margaret. Eleanor had written to her the day she left home, a brief note, telling her that she was resolved to part from Sir Stephen Penrhyn, and begging to hear from her. Margaret's letter began with warm and sorrowful expressions of condolence and affection ; but she dissuaded Eleanor from the step she was about to take, and which she imagined was only the usual sort of separation in cases of domestic dissension. She knew nothing of the contemplated divorce.

“Do not part from your husband, my dear Eleanor,” the letter ran. “Even if it

were not a sin, so to abandon your vowed duties, do not part from him ! The meanest man that ever lived, is a protection to his wife. His name and position are her protection. You are right, and he is wrong : what will that avail you ? In heaven, much ; on earth, nothing ! Some have not time, some have not courage, to balance the truth of your story : some are glad to believe the worst of any woman who parts from her husband : some take it for granted. Your heart will rise in defiance against this reasoning ; you think with scorn of those who would think evil of you ; but reptiles are not harmless ; snakes dart poison with their tongues, and toads spit venom. I know you—I love you—I trust you. I feel for you the most unbounded indulgence and compassion. I think of him with a shudder,—and yet I say to you, do not leave him ! Do your duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call you. Common decency, and the

representations of mutual friends, must prevent his repeating the insult he offered you in your own house, the day he brought young Owen there : and for the rest you must take patience. According to my view of the marriage vow, it is irrevocable ; nothing but death should part you ! The Duchess of Lanark startled me by the assurance that you had already consulted with David Stuart, and that he advised this. Her authority was Lady Peebles, who had heard it from Mr. Malcolm, through some lawyer : but I cannot believe it. I will not believe that his regard and pity for you, could so warp his view of your true interests. Even if it were so, dear unhappy Eleanor, hold firm ! Trust no one's judgment in this ; for this is a question of principle. The alternative is not wise or unwise—the alternative is right or wrong.

“ Ah ! if you had still your children, what a balance that would make in your mind !

How you would anchor, that are now in such danger of drifting with the storm !

“ Do you know what the life is, that you desire to attempt for yourself? Have you ever watched it in others? You leave home because you are wretched—you will be wretched still—and more helpless. You will live in seclusion, you think : but can you be sealed hermetically and sunk in waves of oblivion, like the geni of the Arabian tales? Will no one pity you, will no one admire you, will no one seek to comfort you? Will you, with your warm heart and impulsive nature, live and die without a preference? My Eleanor, it is impossible! By Heavens good mercy, it may lead to no actual sin, but it will make life a restless fever, instead of the calm you seek. That bond you could scarcely bear, while strengthened by the walls of your home—will it guard you for ever when it is merely nominal? Do not part

from your husband, Eleanor ! Return among us—you that we love—you that we respect ; bear the trials of your youth ; it will so soon fleet by ! Life is long, but youth is brief ; if we can but struggle through that, the rest is comparatively easy. Remember that what you do now, will be irrevocable. No one can say, ‘give me my life again, I will make a better use of it.’ By what we do, we must abide. The rapid present, flowing by like the unreturning river, bears us from our past into our future without a pause. We can but look back and see our joys, our griefs, our faults, and our mistakes, lying like stranded weeds on the shore of time. We cannot return and lift them away. We cannot alter our former course, because we see better now where the great shoals lay. It behoves us then, to weigh well what we mean to do, before we do it. How solemn it seems when even a fellow-creature says to us,—‘ I will give you an hour to consider ! ’ Yet God gives us every

hour, an hour to consider what our course shall be; and we will not so employ the time. Like a map whose boundaries are unmarked, our life lies trackless before us, and we go forward at hazard; for *forward* we must go—in that alone we have no choice!

“Eleanor, I beseech you not to think, that because I was myself a happy wife, I am therefore unfitted to comprehend or advise you, in your present position. It was my blessed fate, to live with one I loved and respected; but had it been otherwise, I feel as sure as any mortal creature dare affirm of themselves, that I should have endured to the end; that I should still have been able to say with Milton:

‘I argue not

Against Heaven’s hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope: but still bear up and steer
Right onward!’

And, oh! do not think that what I say in

the way of encouragement, is said in the way of boasting. I do not compare myself with you ; it is my love for you that speaks. Come back to us ; do not part from your husband !

“ When I have sealed and sent this letter, I will kneel down and pray for you. God, who knows the secrets of all hearts, knows how earnest is my affection for you, and my desire to serve you ; and He can comfort and strengthen you when all other comfort and all other strength must fail.

“ MARGARET.”

CHAPTER XV.

THE DREAM FADES.

ELEANOR returned again and again to two sentences in Margaret's letter. That which referred to her guardian; and that which alluded to her children. Margaret would not believe that even "his pity and regard" could so warp David Stuart's view of Eleanor's true interests, that he would countenance or advise her separation from her husband. What would Margaret think, if the truth were made known to her? if

she were told, that instead of the withdrawal of an injured and insulted wife from the home where she had been outraged—instead of a simple separation—she contemplated a divorce; and a divorce for the express purpose of being enabled legally to become the companion of the man, whose counsels Margaret considered perverted, if they leaned to the dividing of man and wife!

Again, the solemn miserable words beat with their heavy knell, in Eleanor's ear: "What God hath joined, let no man put asunder." What God hath joined! She saw herself standing before the sacrament-table, listening and trembling under her long white veil, a young and most unhappy bride; vowing for the unseen future whose limit was in God's hand; vowing for all the years that should intervene between that passing instant and death! When she made that vow, she made it in simple sincerity, and with deep sorrowful awe; when she made it, she believed in truth that only death could end the union by which it pledged her to abide. Was it such a vow

as she had then deemed it, or was it an empty form of words? To how many might it be repeated, if it did not necessarily hold good for one alone? Again and again, might the same lips vow to be "true till death," according to the success and happiness which attended the linking of the hand, with a newly-selected partner? Where was the limit which should yet rivet that broken bond, with a link of sacred faith? That vow—that broken vow—could its words, rising up to insult Heaven with echoes of the past, ever do more, in fact, than make her a contented paramour of the man she loved? could it ever do more than lull her with a vain sound of holiness—a cradle-song for conscience to go to sleep by? Would she herself, in her own secret heart, believe it possible to be wedded to David Stuart by a murmured repetition of the same sentences which married her to Sir Stephen Penrhyn? Never! she felt that in her soul and conscience, that ceremony would be nothing but a delusive mockery; that the roof of God's temple would be but the shelter of unhallowed love; that the

stones of its sacred aisles would be merely a path to David Stuart's arms.

What if he also thought so? What if to him, as to her, the blasphemy of that vainly-taken oath, gleamed with a livid light over the unholy future; and the hot fever of remorse withered and destroyed the blossoms of a perishing love? He would not own it to her, for he was tempted; he desired her to be his wife; he loved her—she knew he loved her; but in his conscience, as in hers, TRUTH might even now be struggling for mastery; now, while yet the radiant virtue wore the shape of a warning angel, instead of an avenging spirit; standing alone in its serene brightness, unaccompanied by regret, repentance, and despair. Oh! what was earthly hope, and earthly passion, in comparison of the great terrible judgment that would be passed hereafter by the light and glory of truth?

Her guardian had advised her to abide by the laws of his country, for rescue and for freedom; but even his own letter showed the

construction that might be put upon their love. He promised never to see her, never even to breathe the same air, or approach the spot where she dwelt, till she was free of her bonds. What did that mean? It meant, that the stamp of degradation was on the idea that Sir Stephen Penrhyn's wife loved David Stuart; it meant, that sin was the watch-word of their hope!

The whole question was, whether that sin could be lessened by being legalized. It might certainly be legalized, if the struggle now making were successful. Did it therefore cease to be sin? Eleanor could not bring herself to believe that it did. There was, as Margaret truly said, but one right and one wrong; the painful right, and the pleasant wrong, stood now in antagonistic contrast to each other. In Eleanor's youth she had married a man she did not love; whom she did not profess to love; for certain advantages — to avoid certain threatening miseries. She had enjoyed those advantages; she had been rescued from those miseries; and

now that they were over, had she the right to annul the unloving vow, for the sake of her first, her only great temptation?

True, her husband was false to her; but his falsehood could not quit her of her vow. His sin was not to be balanced by her sin; even were it because of his sin, and not because of her own wild love, that she had for ever forsaken the shelter of his house.

True, she was scarcely more than a child when she vowed away her future; a child bewildered by sorrow and distress, argued with, advised, entreated, caressed into this marriage, by the best and fondest of her friends, as well as by those who looked upon it in a mere worldly point of view. But neither did that render the marriage-vow of no effect. That might be a warning for others; that might be a beacon light to show on how dangerous a shoal life's happiness was wrecked, when its main anchor—Choice—was cast aside at the very outset, and weak submission, or self-interest, or a despondent carelessness that would not look beyond the darkened hour of trial, swayed the

heart to acceptance of what was in no way truly acceptable. It might be an argument against irreligious, ill-considered, unholy marriages ; a warning to the experienced who undertake to persuade ; and to the young who distrust the great instinct which bids them resist ; but for the fact of her marriage, it did nothing. All that was for others, not for her. For those who had a future—she had only the past ! She could not—as Margaret's letter said—do more than look back and see her errors and mistakes lying stranded on the shore of Time ; she could not return and lift them away—she could not reverse or alter them. Eleanor Raymond was Eleanor Raymond no more : happy or miserable, she was a wife ; the wife of Stephen Penrhyn !

She had been the mother of his children. She thought of the tender sentence in Margaret's letter, " Oh ! if you had still your children, how you would anchor, that are in such danger of drifting with the storm ! " It was true—it was true—and with a burst of weeping, Eleanor leaned her head on her hands, thinking how, if her children had lived, it would

have seemed to her at once sinful and impossible to leave home. Was the sin annulled, because those dear ones had been called away from her, to a better and holier world? Was their father no longer her husband, because God had bereaved him of his sons?

She thought of her children, with a fresh anguish, that had slumbered of late in the consolation of David's presence: of a letter she had found of her own, when hunting among law proofs and papers; a letter written when home was yet endurable; giving an account of the children to her husband, of the little sayings and doings that interest parents only; of Clephane especially, of his going to church for the first time, the flush of joy with which he turned to her when he heard a parable which he understood and was familiar with, read in the lessons for the day. She thought of the real piety of that sweet child; his sad death; his making no call for rescue, but repeating in a loud plaintive voice, the first line of the prayer, "Our Father which art in Heaven:"—and while she thought of these things, the fever of human

passion seemed to die out of her heart, and the image of another and a better world, rose over the restless perplexities of this; luminous, majestic, and holy, like the moon at sea. She remembered some lines she had written many months after her children had died. They recurred to her now with haunting distinctness, and I give them here, even at the risk of many of my readers thinking the grief light or untrue, which can express itself in such a form. Those who make such a criticism, will forgive my saying that it proves only that poetry is not a natural language to them. The Persian, or the Icelander will grieve in tongues which are unknown to us; but their feelings are not the less real because we are unfamiliar with their mode of expressing their sorrow, their passion, or their joy.

Poetry *is* a natural language to some persons. Stray chords of music do not form more easily under the hand of a musician, than the melody of words, to those who have this other gift. You shall see the musician sit down, and run his fingers over the keys, with wandering eyes that

are perhaps watching in the crowd some face that pleases him; and he will produce what to you seems full of an abstruse science—of a difficult mechanical skill; yet the lovely music to him shall be ease and delight; and a message of delight to others. It is so with the poet. Did Canning not grieve for his son, think you, when he wrote the epitaph for his tomb, in the churchyard at Kensington? Did Elton not lament his boys, drowned in each others arms, when he wrote the poems over which many a parent has since wept for sympathy? Were the lines to a sick child, by Alaric Watts, composed by a man callous to his child's suffering? Or is the seal of an intense and enduring regret doubtfully set, on Tennyson's "In Memoriam?"

To say that the grief which is expressed in verse must be unfounded, is to say that a plant has no root because you see only the flowers. Nothing ever touched the heart of the reader, that did not come from the heart of the writer: your sympathy is the test of our truth. For that which is untrue has no power to affect:

the most skilful and admirable composition of that sort, will be but like a sweet sound, wandering without an echo over a level surface. Into the deep caverns of your heart, where it should find an answer, it has not strength to enter !

Eleanor lamented her children in verse, when she ceased to lament them with tears. Ah ! believe that she lamented still !

“Ye were mine, flesh and soul ; mine, oh ! my children,
A portion of myself is torn away ;
The breath of life seems stifled in our parting,
And death-like darkness clouds my lonely day !
A chill sick shudder thrills my yearning bosom,
Where never more your gentle arms shall twine ;
The memory of your voices doubles anguish,
Your voices, that no longer answer mine !
Yet cease, my soul ! Oh ! hush this vain lamenting ;
Earth’s anguish will not alter Heaven’s decree ;
In that calm world whose peopling is of angels,
Those I called mine, still live, and wait for me.
They cannot redescend where I lament them ;
My earth-bound grief, no sorrowing angel shares ;
And in their peaceful and immortal dwelling,
Nothing of me can enter—but my prayers !
If this be so—then, that I may be near them,
Let me still pray unmurmuring, night and day.

God lifts us gently to his world of glory,
Even by the love we feel for things of clay.
Lest in our wayward hearts we should forget Him,
And forfeit so the mansion of our rest,
He leads our dear ones forth, and bids us seek them
In a far distant home, among the blest ;
So we have guides to Heaven's eternal city,
And when our wandering feet would backward stray,
The faces of our DEAD arise in brightness,
And fondly beckon to the holier way!"

Eleanor remembered the verses. She remembered her feelings at the time they were written : the fervour of her prayers ; the constant communion of her soul with God. What temptations could *then* have been strong enough to shake her from that trust ?

"Ease will recant .

Vows made in pain, as violent as void."

But could the memory of those dear ones so fade from her heart, that the thought of them would have no power to save her ? Her nursery, in the old days before she was childless, rose to her mind. She saw her children, kneeling and

looking up at her, while they lisped the evening hymn; the bright shadowy eyes of Frederick the soft wistful glance of Clephane. Almost she heard the voice of those little ones, saying, "Pray!" With a wild burst of weeping she sank to her knees, and with hands clasped and wrung with anguish, and in a low sobbing voice, she murmured her brief bitter prayer:

"Oh! God bring me back to Thee—though it be by a thorny path!"

A loud double knock at the house door recalled her to the world of realities. Who was it? What could it be? Not him—not *him*: he had promised not to come!

While she yet stood trembling on the spot where she had risen from her knees, a firm rapid step was heard on the stairs—the door was flung open—and her half-brother, Godfrey Marsden, stood before her.

CHAPTER XVI.

G O D F R E Y M A R S D E N .

YES, it was Godfrey. The intelligence Mr. Malcolm was reading in the newspaper, when Sir Stephen spoke twice without being heard, was the telegraphed arrival of Godfrey's ship from the Pacific. The circumstance appeared to Tib's kindly suitor to be a direct interference of Providence to save Lady Penrhyn from the scandal and distress of an open quarrel with her husband. He instantly resolved to seek Captain Marsden, and inform him of all that occurred ; so that he might at once interfere for his sister's protection from insult, and procure a reconciliation. Good, earnest, and simple, he saw only the obvious and external causes of

Eleanor's departure: and it appeared to him that if Bridget were sent away to Wales, and young Owen to school, Eleanor might be brought to pardon the day of outrage, which Sir Stephen's anger at the threatened horse-whipping of the little lad had brought upon her. After all, he was not the first gentleman in Scotland, who had owned a natural son; though matters had been brutally and untowardly managed; and it was "no to be thocht o'!" that so painful an event as the forsaking of her husband and home, by the sweet mistress of Penrhyn Castle, was to be the consequence.

So Mr. Malcolm made a rapid journey to Portsmouth. He travelled second class, for he had as little money as any man in the station of a gentleman could command, and that little was principally expended in the hire of a companion for an old blind aunt who had brought him up. He made a cold comfortless journey for Eleanor's sake; from the heart of the Highlands to Portsmouth Docks; and without stopping an instant for rest or refreshment after he got there, he cramped up his long legs in the only wet boat

he could procure, and went tossing over the wintry sea, in that chillest of hours, the hour before dawn, till he got alongside Godfrey's ship. He told the stern agitated sailor everything he knew; wrung him by the hand; and returned to London, where, with some difficulty he discovered where Eleanor lodged, and the name of her legal adviser.

As soon as Captain Marsden could leave his ship, he also made a hurried journey to town; and proceeding first to the lawyer, and explaining who he was, and what his interest in Lady Penrhyn's affairs, was perfectly thunderstruck at receiving in return the information, that Eleanor was about to divorce her husband, and had given all necessary instructions for that purpose.

With Godfrey's notions, it is not surprising that he at once took the darkest and severest view of Eleanor's conduct. David Stuart's return; this domestic quarrel; this burst of independence and defiance on the part of a young, shy, reserved woman; could bear but one interpretation. He remembered the day after David's

supposed suicide; when the conviction of Eleanor's love for this man was impressed upon his mind. He never doubted for an instant that the divorce was to set her free to marry Stuart. He never doubted that she had known for years of his existence, and corresponded with him in America.

"So,"—said he, in his sternest and most repelling manner, as she rose in fear and wonder to greet him,—“I was to have a ship; I was to be sent to sea, that this fellow might skulk back undetected into your home!”

“What do you mean—what *do* you mean?” faltered Eleanor. “Is it possible that you can suppose I was aware my guardian was alive? Can you think so ill of me, as to deem me capable of such monstrous, such unheard of hypocrisy!”

“I have thought ill of you, as you call it, ever since I thought about you at all: nothing you have ever done, has given me any esteem for you; much has inspired me with contempt. Either you have been guilty of that monstrous hypocrisy, the suspicion of which revolts you, or

you are so irresolute and unprincipled, that circumstances and want of opportunity, have alone retarded your progress to sin. Deny to others what you will; to me, it is as clear as day, that in forsaking your husband and home, you are acting under David Stuart's advice, in the hope of becoming, by a most indecent fiction of the law, his wedded wife. I am here to prevent it."

She had prayed to be brought back, even by a thorny path. Ah! how literally did her prayer seemed to be heard and answered!

"I will deny nothing," said she; "though God, who sees the heart, knows how little I deserve your severe judgment. As to your interference, I do not know by what right—"

"By what right—by what right!" exclaimed Godfrey; "by the right an honest heart has to interfere with baseness; by the right which I think may be assumed by the son of the widow, and the brother of the orphan, to whom, in an evil hour, Sir John Raymond left a villain *guardian*!"

The crushing contempt of the last word smote Eleanor.

"Godfrey," said she, "I prayed for strength just before you came in, and I think I may now pray for patience. I am not bound to stay and hear you speak ill of a friend whom I shall for ever love and esteem: his one fault has long since been blotted out, by years of penance and hard endeavour."

"His one fault! did you ever hear of a man of that sort, stopping at one fault? No! weak once, weak for ever; treacherous once, treacherous for ever. He will go on doing self-denial by deputy, all his life; forcing out of others whatever sacrifices Heaven calls upon him to make; giving his burden to others to carry. The magnitude of his offences, and their frequency, will depend upon the magnitude of his temptations; for he will resist none. The conduct of a man without strong principle becomes a mere series of accidents."

Eleanor felt faint—she leaned back, and said feebly:

"Spare him ; he has suffered so much."

"Suffer ! yes, that is the answer of all such men : they fling the happiness, the interests, the past and the future of others, under the Juggernaut wheels of their own selfish irresolution, and when you reproach them with their crushed victims, they reply :—' I also suffered ! I also felt pain, and to avoid its endurance for me, I openly and avowedly burdened others with double, treble, centuple its amount. I feared for myself, and left them by the roadside bleeding.' To save himself the petty mortification in early life which his father's misconduct entailed on him, he risked your whole fortune, (which he had no right to invest at all, unless for your advantage) ; and now he would seduce you from your husband and your home—degrade and ruin you ! Oh !" said he, severely, "there are crimes which human justice cannot punish—but which will be judged of God !"

"Godfrey," replied Eleanor, in a trembling voice, "I might repeat Margaret's words to you on a former occasion, and say 'leave it then to God, to judge him !' When I see the cold and

fierce contempt of your countenance, I lean more than ever to that friend of my friendless childhood ; instead of blaming him, I yearn for his unbounded indulgence ; for the eyes that never met mine without a look of welcome ; for the voice that never addressed me in any tones but those of tenderness. If you have heard my story aright, you will know that David Stuart has nothing to do with this ; that Sir Stephen's conduct—"

"His conduct cannot justify yours. Much of what has happened in your home, is most undoubtedly your own fault."

"My fault !"

"Yes, I know what that life was. I know you."

"I deny that you know me," said Eleanor, passionately. "Those know us, who live with us ; you have never lived with me. You have made one of your own intolerant sketches of what you suppose my disposition to be—and you have filled in that sketch, right or wrong, with every circumstance that has come under your observation. David Stuart lived in daily inter-

course with me, for eight years—eight blessed happy years—and it is not because they ended in darkness, that I will admit your right to judge either him or me, ignorant as you are of the motives of either. My fault!—prove it my fault, that being daily with one so loveable, I loved him, till he failed me and perished, as we all believed. Prove it my fault, that my children perished too; that while others—while you yourself—return safe and strong from shipwreck and mortal danger, my dear ones sank in a summer's day, without a breath of wind to ruffle the water! Prove it my fault, that after doing my best to show the affection and duty of a wife, to a fierce and brutal husband, I found myself rivalled and mocked on the very threshold of my own home, by one little above the condition of a domestic. Fitter for him than me—far fitter—and would he had thought so, and married her!”

As she spoke the last words with passionate scorn, Eleanor rose from her seat, and looking wildly round the room and towards the door, she added, in a choked husky voice :

“Go away! I am worn out; I wish you to leave me. I have a right to protest against this intrusion, even from you. It is now three in the morning—I am much fatigued—I have much to reflect upon; it can afford you little satisfaction to stay and torture me by hard words; leave me, or I must bid you good night and leave you.”

“I did not come here to torture you, Eleanor; I came here to do my duty by you; or what I conceive to be my duty, in the relation in which we stand towards each other. I came to endeavour to prevent scandal; to offer you a home with my wife, till, as I hope, matters may be arranged with your husband.”

“Never! and for your offer of a home—the manner of that offer would alone preclude my accepting it.”

“Such as it is, there it is. I do not affect to offer it from regard or affection. It is offered for my mother’s sake; in her name; to assist, as far as I can, in the support of respectability which appears to me to be on the eve of forfeiture. You know Emma feels kindly to

you : you are welcome to come to us. . If you persist in this divorce scheme, I do not say that I should then wish you to be with her."

"It is not my intention to pursue the divorce."

"No !—I am most solemnly rejoiced to hear you say so. I trust you will see the propriety of returning to Sir Stephen. Your husband is a man of violent passions, and you have chosen to live with him on terms of little affection. You find excuses readily for David Stuart ; find excuses also for the man to whom you are knit by indissoluble—or what ought to be indissoluble bonds."

"Godfrey—I will not deceive you—I had determined before you arrived, to relinquish the divorce. I made that resolution from religious scruples, and upon principle ; but no power shall induce me to return to Castle Penrhyn ; perhaps, if you knew all, even *you* would not counsel it."

And Eleanor thought of her broken arm, and all she had witnessed and heard at the Lodge.

“Do not say ‘even *you*,’ Eleanor! I do not desire to be harsh with you. I assure you, whether you believe it or not, it is more satisfactory to me that you should have made up your mind on principle; before I came; than if I could control you. I will say nothing more at present about a reconciliation with Sir Stephen. I will call to-morrow; hoping to find you willing to accompany me at once to Emma’s cottage at Southsea: and I beseech you, for our dead mother’s sake, to consider well what you do, that is inconsistent with a woman’s duty and reputation. My mother was not as clever as you are, Eleanor, but she had clear views of right and wrong, and, weak and simple as her nature was, it was strong enough to serve God better, I think, than you do. She had her trials. Good night!”

And Godfrey sighed; for he always felt a jealous sorrow when he thought of the love his mother had borne towards Sir John Raymond; and a jealous regret that she could not so love his own father, whom she had always feared, and never blamed!

He was as much softened as it was in his nature to be ; and as he said good night, he took Eleanor's hand, and touched her forehead with his lips. It was a kiss given more to his mother's memory, than to the weary, pale, unhappy young creature who stood before him ; and the momentary pressure seemed as cold, and grieved, and hard, as if it had been from the iron rails which surrounded Lady Raymond's tomb.

When Eleanor was left alone, the night was farspent ; but before it was over, she had written to the lawyer, and to David Stuart.

What that night held of anguish and tears ; what that letter cost, of struggle and wild regret, God only knew, who saw fit so to try one of His creatures. Sorrow is, unhappily, not so rare in this world, but some of those who will read these pages, will be able to measure the depth of her misery by their own experience. And for those who cannot do so—to whom the agony of a bleeding heart is as yet a mystery and a marvel—I pray that God may permit it always to remain a marvel and a mystery to

them ; and that they may be among the favoured group, who seem from the first to have been set in a groove of better and calmer fortune, and who so continue to their journey's end !

CHAPTER XVII.

PARTING PANGS.

THE wild sea was tossing restlessly ; and a few pilot-boats, and boats out oyster-dredging, alone broke the monotony of the view between Southsea and Ryde, when the post-hour brought David Stuart's answer to Emma Marsden's tranquil cottage.

"This is for you, dear," said the gentle wife of her stern half-brother. "I wish you could have some good news."

And, in Emma's simple heart, she thought the best news that could arrive, would be a letter from Sir Stephen, ordering Eleanor instantly to return home, on pain of his severest displeasure ; and even if he were extremely cross to her on

her return, and dreadfully passionate, and swore, Emma thought it would be but just; for no history of wrong or insult (not that Eleanor had added one word of explanation to the brief dry recital Godfrey thought sufficient for his wife, or dreamed of giving such history) could dethrone the notions of a husband in Emma's mind. She looked upon Eleanor, though she truly loved her, less as an unhappy woman, than a revolted subject; and she could not recover from her frightened amazement at the idea of that unprotected journey; that independant arrival in the great swarming city of London; that sitting down in strange lodgings ALONE!

If she had been told that Eleanor had set off by herself for the Pampas, or to hunt wild buffalos in the plains of North America, she could scarcely have been more astonished, or thought of her situation with greater dread.

Eleanor withdrew to her own room to read the letter. She held it a minute or two in her hand before she had courage to break the seal. She hoped David would have taken calmly what she wrote; but her mind misgave her. She

had an instinct that his heart would be deeply wounded ; but she had no instinct of the way he would write to her ; she had no prophetic warning of the wild bitterness of uncontrolled reproach, with which he would address her, of whose gentleness and indulgence she had so confidently boasted to Godfrey.

“ You do not love me—you never loved me ! ” he said. “ If you loved as I do, these scruples would be threads that would snap asunder, not chains to bind you down to a miserable form of virtue, in which the spirit is wanting. What claim has your husband upon your faith ? Does *he* love you ? Has *he* suffered for you ? Is the day darkness,—the night fever,—and time itself a blank to him,—because of your loss ? Does he pine for you, till the very air seems to load instead of relieve his gasping bosom,—as I do ? Is it madness and death to him, to look to the days in which he shall seek and not find you ? Does he yearn for your voice, in the great dreadful silence round him, as though earth had held but that one sound, and dumbness were spread out like a shroud over all

living things since it departed ? . Has *he* given to the single thought of you, the energies of eight years of his youth—in exile, privation, and disgrace ? What is the vow worth, that binds you to such a man ? Will you be wiser and purer than the law which is administered by the upright, and countenanced by the devout ? Will you hold it a sin to stand before God's altar with me, and so tell God's minister who should unite us, that he is a sinner for so doing ? Do you think the right and wrong of all this, was never considered till *you* sate, trembling and alone, to think it over ? Alone—oh ! I repent letting you depart alone ! I repent that mad respect for worldly rules, which prevented my making you my own at once ; which prevented my bearing you from that home of suffering, to one we might have shared together. For you would have gone with me that night, Eleanor—you know you would !

“ I renounce you ! You have forbidden me to claim you—you have assured me your resolution is unalterable—that it is a vow before God ; in presence of the memory of your

children. Be it so. Withdraw your love— your love that I dreamed not of possessing, till *you* led me to hope for it; in that time, when like one who rests by a well in the desert before he toils onward through the barren sands, I rested in your home, and thought to leave it for a renewed exile! Ah, Eleanor! what is your love worth?—your lukewarm love, that has always stepped in trembling every foot of ground that was to lead to me:—that was always weaker than your fears, and my misfortunes! I abjure it—I cast it from my heart! To forsake me now—now that a gleam of light shone at length over the future! What argument can you conjure up, that was not in full force the day your promise bound you to me? For you could not mistake my letter, Eleanor—it said plainly, though not in those brief words: *Free yourself from this man, and be my wife*: and your answer was: *I will*!

What has been since changed, in our relative positions? what has come between us—unless it be the pleading of your half-brother, who

always opposed and hated me? Eleanor, I do not believe the breaking of your most unhallowed marriage would be a sin. I do not believe, that in condemning me to the deepest misery, you are one whit more acceptable to God. I look upon all this as miserable woman's weakness,—and I protest against it with all the strength of my despairing soul!"

That was his letter; he for whom she had lived; for whom she could willingly die. She folded the letter, and replaced it in its envelope, and sate stupidly gazing at the direction. Her own name was there; her own name, in the well-known hand-writing which shone out from among other letters; as if illuminated with a halo. Was it in truth a letter from him?

The flood-gates of sorrow and weakness were loosened. She wept, and dried her tears, and wept again. Then, exhausted by her agitation, she lay down and slept heavily for an hour; and woke, as they wake who are in sorrow, with a vague sense of pain, and a hope that all was a dream; and saw again the letter, and the cold dim dreary sea from the window, and

assured herself that all was real ; that the letter was his ; and the sea the same she had sailed over with him, that sweet calm moonlight night in summer, when they took her for a holiday to the Isle of Wight.

Ah, miserable change !

She did not read his letter again ; but she answered it.

“ You tell me I have not loved you. Oh, do not teach me to reproach you as you have reproached me ! You have loved me,—since you had time to think of me ; but I have loved you, ever since I was a child ! Your love for me has been one thought among many ; but mine for you was the thread on which all other thoughts were strung. Do you think there is no love but that to which union is possible ? Do you think I did not love your memory all those years that I believed you dead,—that you spent in America ? Oh, better than any earthly and actual reality, I loved the dear dream of bygone companionship ! The years that you were with me,—I read, and thought, and studied for your living sake ! The years after your

loss, I did all for the sake of your memory ! I would rather have looked on a page folded down, or marked by your hand, than the fairest sight under Heaven. And I love you still, dear David Stuart. Love is not gone : happiness is gone : that never was meant for my companion. It is true I understood your letter ; true I answered it ; true that had you come for me that fatal day, I should have been lost. Do not regret it ; love me too well to regret it ; rather thank Heaven that it was not so !

“ It is true you have suffered. But those eight years of struggle and remorse, though they were for me, were not by my fault. The years to come, would be by my fault. I know what efforts you must have made to blind your heart. I know that to you, as to me, crime blots the love which we would give each other. We should be three, not two, in that home you image to yourself. Shame would sit by us on the hearth, and shadow our coming in and going out. Not for an hour, not for a year, the awful vow binds ! ‘ Till death do us part.’ How repeat those words to you, having broken

them to another? Let us be miserable apart—not miserable together. Let us be miserable and innocent—not miserable and guilty. I feel that I have more strength to endure as I am, than as I should be. To be far from you is dreadful,—but oh! to be near you *in vain*; to sit by your side and not dare to read in your heart, or tell you what was passing in mine, that would indeed be terrible! Let us be patient under this great anguish, till it please Heaven to lift it away—as all human anguish is lifted away at last! Regret nothing that has saved me from sin. You first taught me the spirit and the meaning of prayer. Do not lament it. I cling to my prayers as though they were the strong cords by which angels could still draw my tempted soul towards heaven. I thank you for them—I think of you as you were when I was a feeble orphan child sick of a long fever, when you were pleading with Heaven for my life. God bless you, dear David Stuart! Go and see Margaret and the Lanarks: do not stay too much alone: write to me: I am sure you have already regretted any

sentence in your letter which I did not deserve."

Yes! he had already repented those sentences. Even before her gentle loving letter reached him, he had written his repentance, and blotted it with his weeping.

"At this hour," he said, "my life lies spread before me; shaming me with its want of purpose and irresolution. When I came from India, I desired but one thing on earth—to do my duty by your father's child. I failed in it! I fled the post where I was set sentinel against the dangers of your future. I thought to repair that error: a providential change enabled me to restore your fortune: a wayward impulse brought me to look upon your face: I saw that divine countenance once more. The moment came, when I felt that I should do well never to look on it again:—but I staid. In the hour of our mutual sorrow, I reproached you—and now—what remains for me but to bid you pray for me sometimes, and be at peace! Oh! when I think that I dared to vaunt my privations as a title to your love; that the mad

mean boast was in my letter, that I had suffered for your sake—I that only suffered for my sin! Did I indeed think a few years of laborious exile sufficient penance for my fault? No! my penance comes now. Then—when your young heart gave itself to me—when in peace and youth, I might have claimed you,—I was self-exiled by my crime; and now—now that I could tear my heart out to leave you, Heaven exiles me, through you! Farewell, my Eleanor! I have no words abject enough to implore your pardon; I will strive to be thankful that I was not suffered to be the means of leading you to that which you believe to be a sin. I will strive to think of you, not as a woman,—not as my ideal of love and loveliness,—but as the little child who sat in the sunshine at Aspendale, with its pale perfect face bowed over that manuscript sermon on instability of purpose, which has so often since risen in my memory as the unheeded warning of some angel message! Farewell!”

So peace was between those two: and love: and the distance of land and sea: and the yet

more dreary distance of a conscious parting—a parting that was to have no reunion upon earth, unless under altered circumstances, and with feelings guarded and smothered into comparative coldness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OTHERS ARE MADE HAPPY INSTEAD OF ELEANOR.

TIME flew rapidly by. More than a year had elapsed since Eleanor left her husband, and she resided still with Godfrey and Emma. Sir Stephen had been applied to, to arrange terms of separation, and make his wife an allowance: but he flatly refused: he said Eleanor had left home without his sanction or permission, and that it was not his intention to part with her: on the contrary, his will and pleasure was, to allow her at the rate of six hundred a-year for the present; in consideration of the circumstances under which she left home, and her being, as Godfrey informed him, in a feeble

state of health. That if, when her health bettered, she did not return to his lawful protection, he would sue her under the English law for restitution of conjugal rights; and if she disobeyed the legal order which was sure to be the result of such proceedings, he should then hold himself free from the liability of maintaining her at all, and cease to countenance her in any way whatever.

And when Godfrey, (who, though a clear-headed sensible man, was no lawyer,) wrote a somewhat exasperated letter to the attorney through whom this communication was made; saying that Eleanor would not return to her husband who had maltreated her; that the allowance was ridiculously small, considering her large fortune, and the income Sir Stephen possessed, and that he should advise her to sue for alimony; the attorney replied with the utmost politeness, that he "made every allowance for the tone of Captain Marsden's letter, as not intended to convey any personal imputation on Sir Stephen's legal advisers;" and "he was sure nothing but Captain Marsden's profound

ignorance of the law, could lead him to contemplate the steps he suggested:" as Lady Penrhyn was not in a position to sue for alimony; on the contrary, she had left home clandestinely, and remained away without her husband's consent; that the regular proceeding, would be a suit on Sir Stephen's part, such as he had declared he would institute; that there was no doubt the court would order Eleanor to return; that the peccadilloes of which her husband had been guilty—though they were such as frequently created dissension in families, and were greatly to be condemned and regretted, would not form a sufficient ground of resistance to the order of the Court; which looked indulgently on these masculine errors; especially as Eleanor had clearly 'condoned' all she complained of, by continuing to reside under her husband's roof long after she became aware of the facts. That as to her allowance, there was no doubt it was amply sufficient for a lady, dwelling, as he hoped and presumed Eleanor intended to do, in obscurity and retirement; but that his client,—in a spirit of generosity and liberality, highly com-

mendable under the circumstances,—had desired him to meet Captain Marsden's remonstrance by an increase of four hundred a-year; and that Lady Penrhyn would accordingly receive at the rate of a thousand a-year; always providing that if she did not return within the space of two years from the date of their quarrel, Sir Stephen would sue her as he stated, and leave her to her remedy of defence to such suit.

There was no help for it. With a perplexed and gloomy spirit, Godfrey extended the protection of his home to his half-sister, and permitted that a portion of her allowance should be paid, so as to make that protection the sole favour he did her. He was sorry for her, but in his heart he blamed her; and in his heart,—in spite of her declaration that she had already decided on her course before she saw him,—he considered he had rescued her from probable degradation and sin. He contrived to make generosity a burden, advice an insult, and abiding with him a daily penance. The step Eleanor had acquiesced in, appeared to him to deliver her over bound into his hands. He

treated her with stern authority, and watched her with jealous suspicion. Too high-minded and honourable to resolve his doubts, he nevertheless doubted over every letter from Scotland which he had to put into Eleanor's hands. On days when she seemed more depressed than usual, he always imagined her occupied with some wavering thoughts of the divorce-scheme which she had abandoned; and broke out into stern comments on her affairs, which had no apparent connection with the conversation they might be holding at the time.

He continued his distrust of her general disposition; he thought her affected and unreal. One of his children was dangerously ill for some time, and Eleanor nursed it tenderly, after Emma was quite worn out with watching. Godfrey was touched; he paused as he passed the half-open door of the sick-room, and spoke to her in a whispered tone of kindness: he hoped she was not tired: he thanked her.

"No, oh! no, not weary. I was early inured to nursing, by my poor little Clephane. I know so well the language of a sick child's eyes—

whether it is pain, or thirst, or mere wakefulness that is in their expression. Oh ! Godfrey, while I sit here, my desolation seems a strange dream to me. I think of Clephane ; it seems to me that I have him again !” And Eleanor’s voice faltered with a low sob, smothered, for fear of disturbing the object of her present care.

The unimaginative, unimpressionable nature of Godfrey, revolted against the sudden change. His manner froze again. He left her, and went to his wife’s room. She was dozing ; and his step, somewhat heavy and brusque, startled her.

“Did I wake you ?” said he. “I’ve been in to see the boy ; he’s better. Eleanor is with him. It is such a pity she can’t help acting, even in times of real feeling. I thanked her, and she went off directly into tears about Clephane, who has been dead these three years, and of whom I have heard her talk, a hundred times, quite calmly.”

“Perhaps she is tired,” said Emma, in a choked voice ; repressing a strong impulse also to burst into tears ; being very weak and anxious ; and growing daily more attached to

her unhappy sister-in-law. "Perhaps she is tired. She is so very kind, dear Godfrey,—and the children are so very fond of her," added she, pleadingly.

"Yes; they do not see her faults: I do."

And the stern sailor turned away; and shutting the door with a suddenness that made Emma start in her bed, retired to take a stroll by himself, and reflect upon Eleanor's errors.

Lady Margaret had spent the winter at Naples; on her way back to Dunleath, in the spring, she came to see her old friends, at their pretty cottage in the Isle of Wight. She wished very much to take Eleanor with her, to Dunleath, but the latter shrank from the notion of such an abode,—even though shared with Margaret. The two friends parted sorrowfully, for Margaret thought Eleanor looking very ill, and Eleanor was beginning to comprehend how it was, that people might "die of a broken heart;" a phrase which she had held to be fabulous; but which seemed to be daily more and more clearly interpreted to her by her own feelings. A death, not sudden or violent, but

like that of a flower broken at its stalk ; a dreary sapless lingering sort of life, ending some withered day, without apparent struggle. Well, she would not mind dying so—if it was to be !

Godfrey consulted the doctors about her. They recommended “ cheerful society, and change of scene.” They said, they had seldom seen such complete prostration without actual disease ; and that English persons born in India, had often that sort of delicate, nervous, languid constitution.

Godfrey pitied her—but he was also provoked. Provoked to think how excellent a lot she had had, if she would but “ have made the best of it :” provoked at this illness that was no illness ; this prostration without disease ; this necessity for change of scene—which he did not choose to hint at her taking alone, and yet considered it highly inconvenient to share. Having, however, duly considered what it would be right to do ; he came to her one morning ; and in a grave determined way—as though he were pronouncing the sentence of a court-

martial, and returning her her sword with a reprimand ;—he informed her that Emma much wished to see Switzerland, and that they were going there on a pleasure jaunt for a couple of months or so, which he hoped would be agreeable to Eleanor, and amend her health. Which intimation Eleanor received with some degree of pleasure, and to Godfrey's great satisfaction, smiled ; and said she should like it very much.

It was a relief to her, to leave that sunny little island where she had been for her holiday in girlish days ; a relief to go among strange mountains, where,—as in the calm world to come,—there should be “ no more sea ;” where she could not daily behold those restless waves ; whose vain change of light and shade, of storm and fair weather, gave her back incessantly one single picture, of the yacht by moonlight, with David Stuart clasping her in his arms, while the heavy brig was passing which had nearly run them down.

They went to Switzerland ; but Eleanor's health did not improve ; she bore the fatigue with difficulty, and when they reached Geneva,

it was decided that she should rest there a few days. Some chill which she got, in her first sail on the lake, brought on inflammation of the lungs; and they were compelled to make halt for her recovery. Godfrey went hither and thither on expeditions, and Emma gently and gratefully returned to her sister-in-law, the care and nursing which the latter had so lately bestowed on Emma's sick child.

The fresh blue Rhone swept onwards under the windows of the hotel, where Eleanor was lying on the sofa, while Emma sat working by her side; when a waiter vaguely announced a "compatriote,"—and Mr. Malcolm, looking extremely lank, sunburnt, and glad, made his appearance. He said that he had been seeing something of Switzerland; but was now going to Naples, to the Dowager Duchess of Lanark, upon business connected with "the happy event;" and asked Eleanor if she had yet got her letters from Scotland? No, Eleanor had not got them; and she sent her passport to demand any that might have arrived at the Poste Restante.

"Ye're no aware then, o' the intelligence that has been communicated to her Grace? The 'gude tidings o' great joy,' as I hope I may be pardoned for ca'ing them, being after a' but an earthly blessin', tho', indeed, Leddy Margaret's just as near a heavenly creature as any blessin' could alight upon."

"What has happened to Margaret?" said Eleanor, with a gentle smile; "is she to have another estate bought for her?"

"Oo, Mem—Leddy Penrhyn—it's just satisfactory for a' parties; and I am sure ye'll hear it wi' pairfect delight, and we'll maybe see ye back amongst us, in the Hieland air, that 'ill bring the colour back to yere cheek," and he looked tenderly and wistfully, like an affectionate shepherd's dog, at the wan, sweet face before him. "The news is just this, and naething less, that Leddy Margaret has given consent to espouse Mr. Stuart."

The wan cheek that was to be restored to health by Highland air, reddened with a gush of colour such as sometimes spreads a reflected light all over the heavens immediately before

the sun goes down; and then Eleanor's face faded to a paleness so extraordinary, that Emma rose, in alarm, for some restorative medicine.

"Don't tell her news; don't tell her any news at all!" said poor Emma, in a terrified tone. "Can't you see how weak she is?"

"No, let him tell me; send for the letters—here *are* the letters!" and the waiter entered and gave them to her. "Here is Margaret's letter; my dear Margaret's letter—my dear Margaret—oh, my dear Margaret!" and with wild hysterical weeping, Eleanor sank back without opening the letter, which fell from her shuddering nerveless hand.

Emma picked it up again, gave her the composing-draught she had already poured out, and turning to Mr. Malcolm,—who stood with his eyes full of tears, dolefully repeating: "Eh, Miledddy! eh, Mem! eh! but this is sair wark,"—begged him to go; saying that he would find Captain Marsden later in the day, and that Eleanor would be better then. After which, she took her work, and placed a chair on the balcony and sate down there, so as to be able

to see if Eleanor required her, or seemed worse ; and yet not be an intrusion upon her.

She had no idea that it was more to the invalid than a startling and interesting piece of intelligence. Neither had Margaret—whose long, happy letter was now opened—any more idea that Eleanor had loved David, than that David had loved her. She remembered how clearly his agitation, the day of the thunder-storm, had been explained by miserable circumstances afterwards ; and that was the only occasion on which she had thought such a thing possible.

Eleanor had been too much ashamed of her mistaken belief in her guardian's affection, ever to confide, even to that bosom-friend, the dream of her early love ; and Margaret had seen nothing in the tender welcome accorded to David at Castle Penrhyn, after his return to America, that was not perfectly natural. She had precisely the contrary experience of Lady Macfarren. The purity of her own heart prevented her from suspecting sin and she would certainly have considered it a sin, if Eleanor had allowed her thoughts to wander

to any man, being, as she was, the wife of Sir Stephen Penrhyn. It had never occurred to her, that there existed more between them than the affection of guardian and ward. The innocent-heartedness of some women, who have nevertheless lived in "the world," is as marvellous as the corruption of others.

She told Eleanor it had all come about very suddenly ; she herself hardly knew how, but she knew she was very happy ; that she and David had had a sort of boy-and-girl love for each other, in very early days ; and that it was to him she had alluded, when she reasoned with Eleanor at the time of her marriage, and told her she had been a happy wife, though she had not married her "first love ;" that, on returning from Naples this time, she found him looking so ill and worn, she would scarcely have recognised him ; and the Duchess of Lanark, with her coquetry quite lost in real anxiety to cheer him. That they all thought he took very much to heart Eleanor's unhappy separation from her husband ; he could not bear to be spoken to on the subject. That finally, one day

when they were at Lanark's Lodge, and talking of his coming over to Dunleath for a day or two, Euphemia said, innocently: "*I wish you would come and stay always—for ever—at Dunleath; and I'm sure mamma would like it too.*" That the Duke had laughed at Margaret's confusion at this speech, and had followed it up by observing that he really did not think Margaret would say 'no' to such a proposal. And then David Stuart had turned suddenly round to thank her for her regard and compassion, and to say all sorts of wild, foolish speeches about Dunleath, and misery, and degradation; which ended, nobody knew how, in a clear understanding that he and Margaret were to make one home of it, and that he was to come to Dunleath as its master.

Then she spoke of the happy future, when Eleanor should come and stay with them, and Margaret would 'build a nest for her wounded dove;' and she said as soon as they were married they meant to go to the old Duchess of Lanark at Naples for awhile, and they hoped to see Eleanor abroad; and she ended by telling

Eleanor to expect no more letters signed Margaret Fordyce, for that the next would be from Margaret Stuart.

"Margaret Stuart!" Why did those two written words make all seem more real to Eleanor than any of the sentences that had preceded them? Her new signature—her claim to his name—to his future—to his past! To his past!—was it possible? Surely the past had been Eleanor's! Yet how could she feel sure of it—how, in the bewilderment and inexplicable strangeness of all present circumstances, could she feel sure even of that?

He had never loved her—never really loved her. She was too like him: she had often heard it said, that people loved best, the greatest contrast to themselves. It was Margaret he had loved and leaned to always! Sweet, cheery creature, who could help loving her—who ever resisted the charm of her presence—why should he? Her laugh, her smile, her earnest words, who could know them and not be bewitched by them? Her smile—how vividly

Eleanor recalled it: its sweetness unparalleled: the small red mouth; the glittering teeth; the kind, cordial, honest eyes, that smiled with the mouth's smiling; the tinge of triumph and energy, consciousness of power, and desire to make a generous use of power, that shone out of that noble countenance! Oh, why did it make Eleanor moan to think of these things!

He was to be happy—happy after years of suffering—happy after standing on the brink of an awful temptation, whose boundary-line had been drawn by her hand. No one could now molest or insult him; he was to be the master of Dunleath; the Duke of Lanark's brother-in-law. Margaret had been able to do for him, without struggle, without sacrifice, all that Eleanor had vainly sighed to achieve, at whatever cost to herself. Dunleath was to be his home once more; he was to "return there and find it bright again," as Eleanor had prophesied to him the day of their party, when she had pitied his grief. He would grieve no more in that home! Margaret and he were to dwell

there, in all the security and repose of hallowed attachment; treading the old paths they had known in childhood,—before he ever saw Eleanor's face; singing the songs they used to sing at quiet Aspendale.

Well, *he* was to be happy. What else mattered, on this side heaven? He was to have peace and safe anchorage, after the weary storms of his youth. Did she wish it otherwise? would she think of her own wrecked life, which nothing could set right; which was for ever darkened—and by him?

No, for she loved him still! If one wild flash of thought showed her the abyss of her own destiny, it was only to bid her heart, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, swing round to the deep sea anchorage of her early trust in him. Why misjudge him? how had he erred? had she not herself made irrevocable sentence of separation between them? Was he to remain for ever without ties, because she had been his hope, who was now his despair?

No! all was right; all was well; all was for

the best: and as she thought of Dunleath, she prayed for Margaret and David, and the happiness of their mutual home; for she felt sure that come what may, he had loved her better than life itself.

Oh! feel sure, Eleanor! He spoke no more than truth, when he told you that you were his ideal of love and loveliness. The woman who is so beloved, may have successors, as she has had predecessors; but rivals—properly so-called—she has none. Lone and different as the moon in a heaven full of stars, she remains in the world of that man's heart. He has known other women, and he has known HER.

It may be the love of his youth, or the wife of his old age—first love, or last love—it matters not. *The* love,—the one love that fulfils all the exigencies of illusion, all the charms of sense, and all the pleasures of companionship, comes but once in a man's lifetime. The rest are substitutes, makeshifts for love. To them in vain he shall affirm, or deny, that which they desire or dread to hear. In his heart a shadow

sits throned, who for ever bends down to listen—to watch those who would approach him—and bar them out, with whispers of sorrowful comparison, and the delight of remembered days !

CHAPTER XVIII.

ELEANOR CEASES TO BE UNHAPPY.

GODFREY and Mr. Malcolm returned together; having met at the bridge which connects Jean-Jacques Rousseau's island with the town. Captain Marsden was extremely cheerful. He saw in the intelligence just received, a chance, however vague, of his sister being induced contentedly to return to her husband; and at all events, an utter impossibility for the future, of David Stuart being anything to her but a friend. He thought of the latter with profound contempt, and of Margaret's choice of him with surprise; but of the event itself he was sincerely glad.

Mr. Malcolm too, was in high spirits ; and when Eleanor, who had recovered her calmness, met him with tranquil kindness and asked how he had enjoyed his brief holiday tour, he became quite enthusiastic in praise of Switzerland. He assured her, he thought the road from Basle to Berne was "just the high road to heaven," and as to Chamouni, Interlaken, and the wilder portions of the country, he could not say too much in their praise.

"And to see they wee things, the shammy kids, standin' up on the peaks o' the hills, dippin' their bits o' feet into the rosy snow, is just a gratification and a delight, such as I've had no experience o' in a' my memory. For deer-stalking's a noble sport,—an' ye may mind, Leddy Penrhyn, how well I enjoyed it ; but it's an every-day matter ; I've been at it a' my life. But for the shammy huntin' it's just an awakenin' surprise at every step. Oo ! it's the varry maigic o' happiness ! I that was ever an' always sae fond o' wild sports ! Weel I mind Mistress Stuart o' Dunleath gieing a nip o' my cheek wi' her bonny white han', an' lookin'

kindly in my face whan I tauld her I was to be a writer and go up to Christison in Edinburgh. 'Will they mak' a writer o' ye, my wee wild shepherd?' quo' she. 'They'll mak' naethin' o' ye but just a hunter o' the hills'. And she was richt, Mem. I'm no for the town, tho' it's my lot to be there, scratchin' wi' a pen, mony a-day when I'd fain be out wi' the guns an' the dogs. I'm for the hills, and the kilt, and the plaidie. Here's to the plaidie and the hills, whether they're Hieland hills or Swiss mountains !"

And in the excess of his delight, Mr. Malcolm drank a toast all to himself, and set down his glass with an extatic smile.

And before he bid the party farewell, he strongly advised Godfrey to go for a week or ten days to Chamouni, where there was a party of English gentlemen, two of whom were known to Captain Marsden, and had spoken of him when Mr. Malcolm mentioned his being at Geneva. And Godfrey told his wife he thought he could not better employ the days of Eleanor's convalescence, and departed accord-

ingly for those regions of "shammy kids" and snowy peaks.

Eleanor at first seemed to mend. Then she had a little increase of fever; and then a little increase of weakness; and then fever again. And the English doctor pronounced her state to be "extremely unsatisfactory," and called in another physician of eminence; and they puzzled over Eleanor's condition; after which they talked of English travellers, and foreign politics, and looked out at the Rhone, and went away; advising Emma not to allow her sister-in-law to be alone, as in the state of debility in which she was, "if syncope should supervene, without some one at hand to administer proper remedies, it was doubtful whether the action of the heart would return,"—which half-understood announcement terrified Emma exceedingly, but could not add anything to the tender care she already took of the invalid.

It was the evening Godfrey was expected to return; and Eleanor, who had been getting gradually weaker, was lying in a sort of doze. Presently she spoke; half opening her eyes.

"Sing that again—sing that again!" said she. "Emma, beg Margaret to sing that again!"

"Your head is wandering, dear; no one is singing;" said Emma gently and compassionately.

"I thought I heard music: I certainly thought I heard my dear Margaret singing 'The Land o' the Leal.' And now—I know it is only fancy—but it seems to me I hear the waterfall, down the rocks of the roaring Linn at Aspendale!"

"Oh! that you really hear," said Emma with some eagerness, as she rose and moved to the bedside. "That is the rush of the Rhone, you know, sweeping past the hotel windows; I have been watching it; it is so lovely in the moonlight."

"Yes—it will be lovely, too, at sunrise!"

And Eleanor sighed; and closed her eyes; and seemed to doze again. Emma returned to her place by the window; there was a dreary pause. It was broken by Eleanor; she moved restlessly; she spoke in a strange altered voice.

"My good little Emma," said she, "don't

be frightened,—but I feel very ill—much worse—call my maid.”

Emma rose and obeyed; she looked at her sister-in-law, as she passed hurriedly to the door of the ante-room to summon the attendant, and she then saw, in Eleanor’s face, that expression which like the first look of love, even those who have never yet beheld it, never can mistake—the look of DEATH!

Emma felt dreadfully frightened: she shook from head to foot: but if she had not her husband’s nerve and sternness, she had his exact sense of duty. She knew it was her duty to be useful; to struggle with her fear; she strove to think of God and heaven, and not of the agony that intervened. She opened the familiar pages of her prayer-book at the prayer for the dying; she knelt down trembling by Eleanor’s bedside.

“Tell Godfrey I thank him;” said the latter faintly; “we misunderstood each other often; but I thank him; give him my love—when he returns.”

When he returned! She felt she should

not see him—brief though the interval might be.

A few sentences were read by Emma: then Eleanor started and moved.

“Lift me!” said she to the maid. The woman raised her. She looked wildly upwards, and stretched her arms. “Emma,” said she with a glad soft smile, and in a louder voice than she had yet spoken, “I see my children! I see them as plain as I see you! There—there—waiting for me! So near—and yet so far!”

The smile wavered; faded a little; and then seemed to become strangely fixed,—as with a sudden heaviness she dropped back in the arms of the attendant nurse.

“Eleanor, my dearest!” said poor Emma, in a choked voice.

But Eleanor heard no more! Song,—and speech,—and the sound of weeping,—and the rush of earth’s rivers and waterfalls,—were over, for her. She was gone from the changeful imperfect affection of fallible human friends, to that merciful Creator who allots such various desti-

nies to his creatures on earth, but gives them one sentence for the hereafter, "Those who do well to the resurrection of life, and those who do evil to the resurrection of damnation."

When Godfrey returned, he found all over, and Emma alone in the hushed death-chamber, sobbing bitterly. She addressed the poor pale corpse, though she knew it was death she gazed on.

"Oh, I hope my children may be like you! I thank you for your many kindnesses to them and me,"—sobbed Emma to dead Eleanor!

Godfrey entered, and Emma's tears were checked. She was always awed by her husband. He took her hand. "You should command yourself;" said he. Then he walked to the bedside, and looked sternly and sorrowfully on the face of the beautiful dead.

The strange peace of her smile met his gaze: it seemed to say, "I was miserable once; but now I am happy." He sat down, and covered his face with his hands.

After a pause, he rose ; and taking a turn with folded arms in the room, he stopped as he returned, and said to Emma :

“ It is for the best ! God’s will be done. With her propensity to error, we should look upon her as taken away from the evil to come.”

For he made himself her judge, even then !

So Eleanor died ; and they buried her at Secheron—where, in the midst of the blue boundless space, and among the free everlasting hills, the dead lie enclosed, each in the narrow prison house allotted them ; watered with few or many tears ; remembered or forgotten.

And to the end of Godfrey’s life—even as by that mournful death-bed—he constituted himself the judge of his fellow-creatures. It was the defect of his nature ; and in the weak guiding and training which alone he received from his mother, he had not been taught to control it. It had been suffered to grow with his growth, and to strengthen with his strength, and it never left him till his own death-hour.

CHAPTER XIX.

A FAREWELL TO THE READER.

ALL the characters in this book, like Godfrey, retain their distinctive peculiarities. None are dead but Eleanor; and nearly all, when they think of her, think themselves better than Eleanor; and better than others who have different faults or misfortunes.

Duly does Godfrey go twice to church on Sundays: devout is his conviction that he is a good man: entire and unbroken is the respect for him which his neighbours entertain, and the love for him which his timid wife preserves. All the children accompany their father to

church ; down to the last little one that can read. Severely does he punish any little curly head that looks up, or yawns, during the long incomprehensible service. Awful, in his family, is the idea of "offending papa;" more dreadful than the fact of doing wrong ; which puzzles simple Emma—for she feels, much as she reveres Godfrey, that the fear of Heaven should somehow predominate in the children's hearts.

Tib also goes to church very regularly. Even when she has a bad cold in her head, (and Tib is very subject to snuffling colds) she orders out her carriage ; and is trotted gently to the church door ; and goes rustling into her pew lined with crimson cloth, and furnished with crimson cloth hassocks ; and looks round triumphantly at the rest of the congregation. Even bad weather does not stop Tib. The only difference is, that she has the bays out, instead of those handsome restive greys that require such skill in driving ; for she don't care so much about the bays taking cold : and the coachman encourages it, for when the bays go out, and it is a wet Sunday, he makes the

second coachman drive. So they come out all sleek, and covered, and shining, with oil-silk coverings over the hammer-cloth and the servants' hats, and take gorgeous Tib to church. Especially in the country; for Tib says, people ought never to miss church, "because of setting a good example to the poor."

And certainly if Tib's example be of any use, it is impossible the poor can be otherwise than impressed by it; for they all stand gaping in the road, as the great glittering gaud goes by which they know is the *tout-ensemble* of the Countess of Peebles going to divine service. And when the women put down their pattens at the church-door, and give a glance at their gowns,—hoping they have held them tidily up, all the wet way that they have trudged to answer in person the sound of the Sunday bells,—they are perfectly well aware that Tib's example is gone in before them; and hardly refrain from curtseying, as they pass the crimson-lined pew, so great is their respect for Tib.

And Tib thinks of Eleanor with a mixture of spite and contempt; and has no very clear idea

of what happened to her latterly, but knows she is dead.

And one of Tib's lions,—a poet-lion, (for they are not so worldly-wise as the other lions, and not near so wise as the tigers) is foolish enough to ask Tib after young Lady Penrhyn; of whom he is reminded, he himself scarcely knows how, by the scent of heliotrope and geranium, and the want of a lovely face to rest his eyes on, in the weary crowd at one of Tib's parties.

And Tib feels as though she ought to blush, at being asked after an unhappy creature who was separated from her husband, and died in retirement; but Tib cannot blush; so she rubs the end of her nose with the tight white glove which covers the fat hand the Duchess used to worry; and she answers sharply, that she knows very little more than that Lady Penrhyn is dead; and that "of course," after she left Sir Stephen, she, Tib, saw no more of her.

And then she rustles away from him; half because she is offended and confounded at being asked after Eleanor, and half because she sees the young Duke of Cambridge coming in at the door.

And the poet-lion is disgusted with Tib ; and in his heart he calls her hard names ; and he thinks what a lovely face Eleanor's was ; and what sweet eyes she had—eyes made for smiling, which yet must have wept so much. And he don't believe a word of Eleanor's being a wicked woman ; for he trusts in expression, like all poets ; and at last Eleanor seems to rise like a vision before him ; (poets being able to raise visions as the witch raised Saul), and he mutters something to himself about "haunting eyes,"—and "a cruel world,"—in the midst of which, gorgeous Tib rustles back ; and seeing him look gloomy and fearing he may be displeased, and withdraw his leonine presence from her future parties, she stops and asks him to dinner for the next Thursday ; and the poet smiles, and accepts, and comes to dinner ; and gets green peas, though they are not yet in season ; and sends Tib some very pretty verses "On Spring,"—and forgets all about Eleanor.

And I can assure the anxious reader, that Tib continues a career of uninterrupted prosperity, and fortune cherishes Tib, and helps her

to climb on, in the world she has climbed into ; and teaches her to " improve the shining hour," by perpetually cutting old acquaintances, smothering old friendships, and forcing herself on new introductions. And the little Dagon is taken such care of, that he promises to be nearly immortal. Still does he come out, like hermetically-sealed provisions for a yacht voyage, unexpectedly fresh and brilliant ; his neat little head with powder scattered over it, like the bloom of the plum. Still—though he no longer dances—there is a shuffle in his feet, and a snap of his fingers, as he sits in his chair watching reels being danced at the royal balls ; (for Tib goes to all the royal balls, and her motto is " Who but Tib ! ") And the Dagon dare no more interfere with the Dagoness and her preferences, or question her conduct, than he would dare walk about in a hail-storm ; so when she does not want him, at home or abroad, she sends him to bed. And he loves his Tib ; and is proud to see her come sailing towards him, to order him to bed ; arrayed in satins and diamonds ; and he is a happy, though rather a cowardly little

Dagon, and never thinks of Eleanor, or of the day when he was put *en pénitence* at Castle Penrhyn.

And Lady Macfarren also goes to church ; and says her fierce prayers, that resemble the service in Ember week, of God's commination against sinners ; and she glares angrily during her brief rare visits at the Castle, at Bridget Owen ; for Bridget Owen is now Lady Penrhyn ; and her son is legitimatised under the Scotch law ; and is heir to the Welsh property—and the Scotch property—and the little churchyard at Carrick, which holds the grave of Frederic and Clephane !

And Sir Stephen has quite forgotten all about Eleanor ; if she is dead, why so are a great many other women he knew long ago ; and though she was very beautiful, she was not fond of him, and his marriage did not answer, and he'd much rather be as he is now, if the neighbours and Janet would be kinder to Bridget.

And Bridget and Lady Macfarren have fierce fights ; and Bridget won't go to Glencarrick, but lets Sir Stephen go there alone, in

the shooting-season ; and handsome Owen is as insolent as possible to his wrathful aunt : and goes to Glencarrick as a favour ; and says he “ does it for company for his father ; and don’t care if he never saw the Ogress again,”—and by the Ogress he means his Aunt Janet ; who cannot prevent his calling her an ogress ; or his being heir to her brother ; though it drives her wild to think of it.

But Tib—being wiser in her generation than the Ogress—makes friends with Bridget ; for she knows that her yacht provisions cannot last for ever, and that some day her Airle will be dead and Sir Stephen be Earl of Peebles, and Bridget his Countess, and she only Dowager-Queen of old maids. So she coaxes Bridget, and they drive together in the summer in Hyde Park, in a beautiful open carriage ; and the ladies look at Bridget from under their parasols, and pretend to scorn her ; but, in fact, many of them envy her in their hearts ; and the gentlemen ride before, and behind, and on each side of the carriage, trying to get a glimpse of Bridget ; and

they say she is "perfectly beautiful, and very original, and has the most bewitching little Welsh accent in the world."

And Bridget is as happy as the day is long ; though she is very jealous of Sir Stephen ; for she really loves him, and meant to be "true till death" to him, even if they had not married ; and she is sorry for her insolent days, when Eleanor was Lady of the Castle ; and is very kind to old Sandy, who has come back to die in his native place, and is bed-ridden in one of the cottages.

And Lady Margaret goes to church also ; with pretty Euphemia, whom David has prepared so tenderly and carefully for her first communion, and with a little girl called Eleanor, the eldest child of her second marriage ; but not with her two little boys, because she thinks them too young. And she thinks of Eleanor with deep tenderness and enduring love ; and humbly prays to Heaven to enable her to do her duty ; fearing to love David's boys better than the child of her youth ; fearing all things

that she thinks are a dereliction from the straight path ; and yet walking in it ever, with a pure and earnest heart.

And she and the Duchess of Lanark talk of Eleanor, as they turn from the church-door at Carrick ; and the tears sometimes rise to the Duchess's beautiful eyes, to answer the bitterer gush of weeping that Margaret cannot always forbear. And the little Duchess has almost entirely left off coquetting, and has taken a new tone, and says she "would not change her noble-hearted Lanark for any man in Christendom." And noble-hearted Lanark is perfectly satisfied, and "always felt sure she would steady, and get rid of her one fault ;" and thinks it so pretty to hear her lecture her little girls on vanity ; and never even wakes to the consciousness, that the generosity of his trust perhaps saved her from sin ; or on what a thread it hung, at one time, whether she would be a *femme incomprise* with lovers, and lead a vile life, even under the sacred roof of her own home. Nor indeed would the little Duchess herself admit, that there ever could have been the chance of such a

frightful termination to her vanities ; but she owns that she has been more touched and governed by his trust, than she could have been by lectures or control of any sort.

And the vain little sylph, though she loved and pitied Eleanor, still thinks herself superior to Lady Penrhyn, inasmuch as she was never parted from the Duke ; or had any open quarrel ; or shocked the world in any way ; and the world continues perfectly satisfied with the Lanark establishment, and so do the Lanarks themselves.

And David Stuart ?

David is still beloved by his adorable wife ; and is master of Dunleath, and of her good true heart. The Duke of Lanark is fond of his brother-in-law. No one insults or mortifies him, with the disgrace or misfortunes of his youth. No one knows the story of his love for Eleanor ; he never told it to living soul, nor did she. Godfrey did but conjecture half the truth, when he presumed his sister's preference for her guardian. Margaret believes herself to be the crowning joy of David Stuart's life ; believes it—

and deserves it—but is not ! There is a cold pain in his heart, which even her warm glad smile shall never sun away ; there is a memory which all her beauty and all her charm cannot avail to shut out. Eleanor—his Eleanor—whom he loved and injured ; haunts that home of his youth, for the regaining which he risked her fortune, and ruined her future.

He looks on his own child's face, and wonders if Heaven will yet further punish him, by creating misfortunes for *her* : will she, too, make an unhappy marriage ? and so, struggle as she may to do her best, before God and man, find life shattered into days that shall resemble the fragments of a broken mirror, that never can unite again to give back the perfect image of peace ? Will he be able to guard his own child from misery ? he that failed in his trust with the daughter of his early benefactor !

He loves that little girl the best of all his children ; though she is not so handsome or glad as the others : he loves that pale energetic face, with its frank and noble smile, so like her uncle Lanark's. Her name is Eleanor, too ;

Margaret wished it; she was born the year after Eleanor died, when Margaret's heart was heavy and sad for the loss of her friend. She understands her father's moods; she knows his mournful days; she sits often on his knee by the Greek sun-dial; in silence; neither grieving nor comforting, but conscious that he is sad; leaning her little cheek against his, as they watch the sunset together. And the shadows pass over David's heart, even as over the face of the dial!

Sometimes, as they sit so, they hear Margaret's pleasant laugh under the old firs, where she is playing with the boys. Margaret's joyous happy laugh: for there are no shadows on *her* heart: no thoughts that lie hidden in pain and darkness from those she loves best. And, oh! what lovely boys are those two glad children! How, when their miniature by Thorburn was exhibited, mothers smiled and murmured over the representation of their beautiful faces; and eagerly looked out the number of that picture in the catalogue, and found it inscribed:—

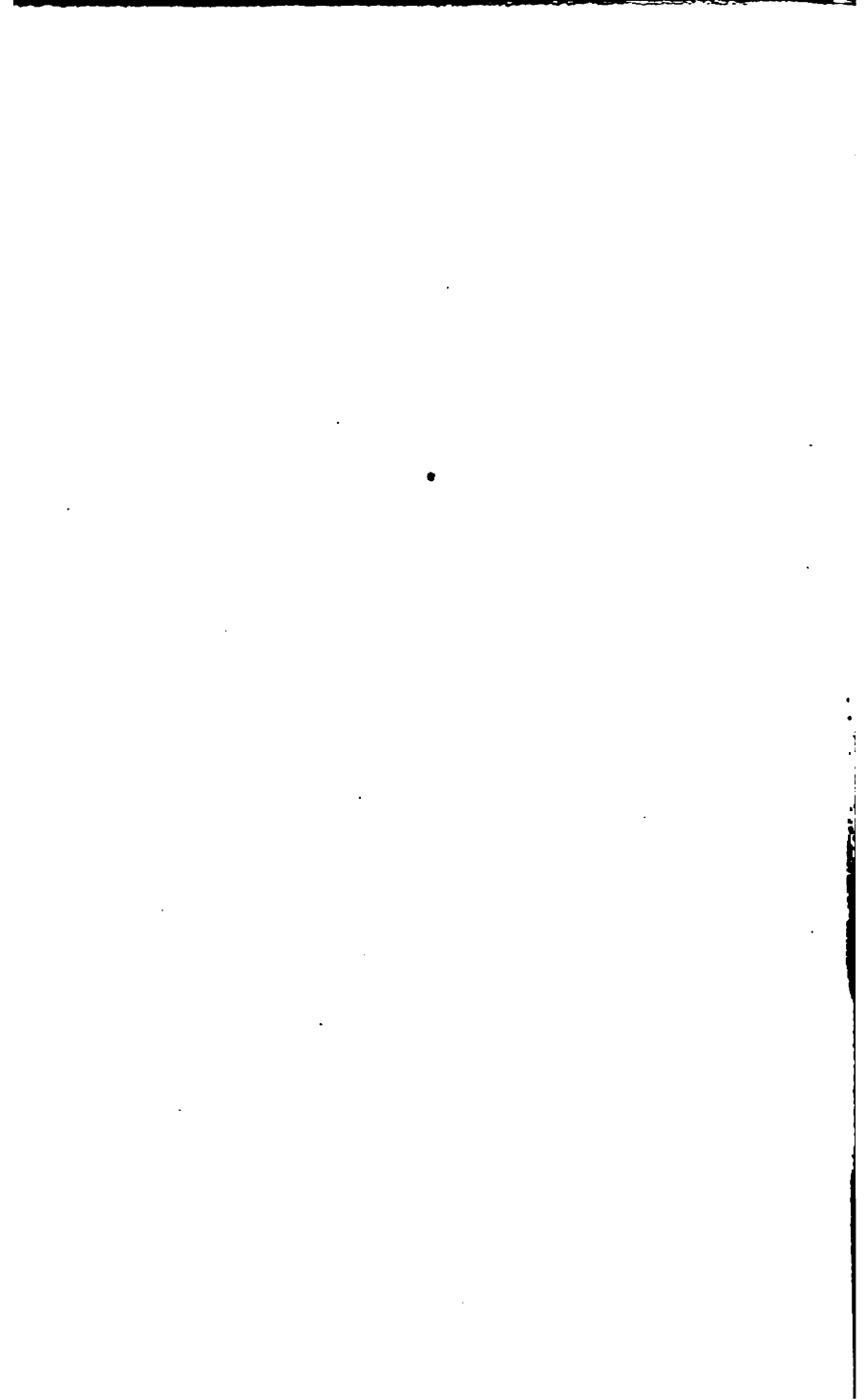
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But the waves of the ocean of life have closed over Eleanor; and the grass is green on the grave of her little joyous Frederic, and her gentle, pious Clephane!

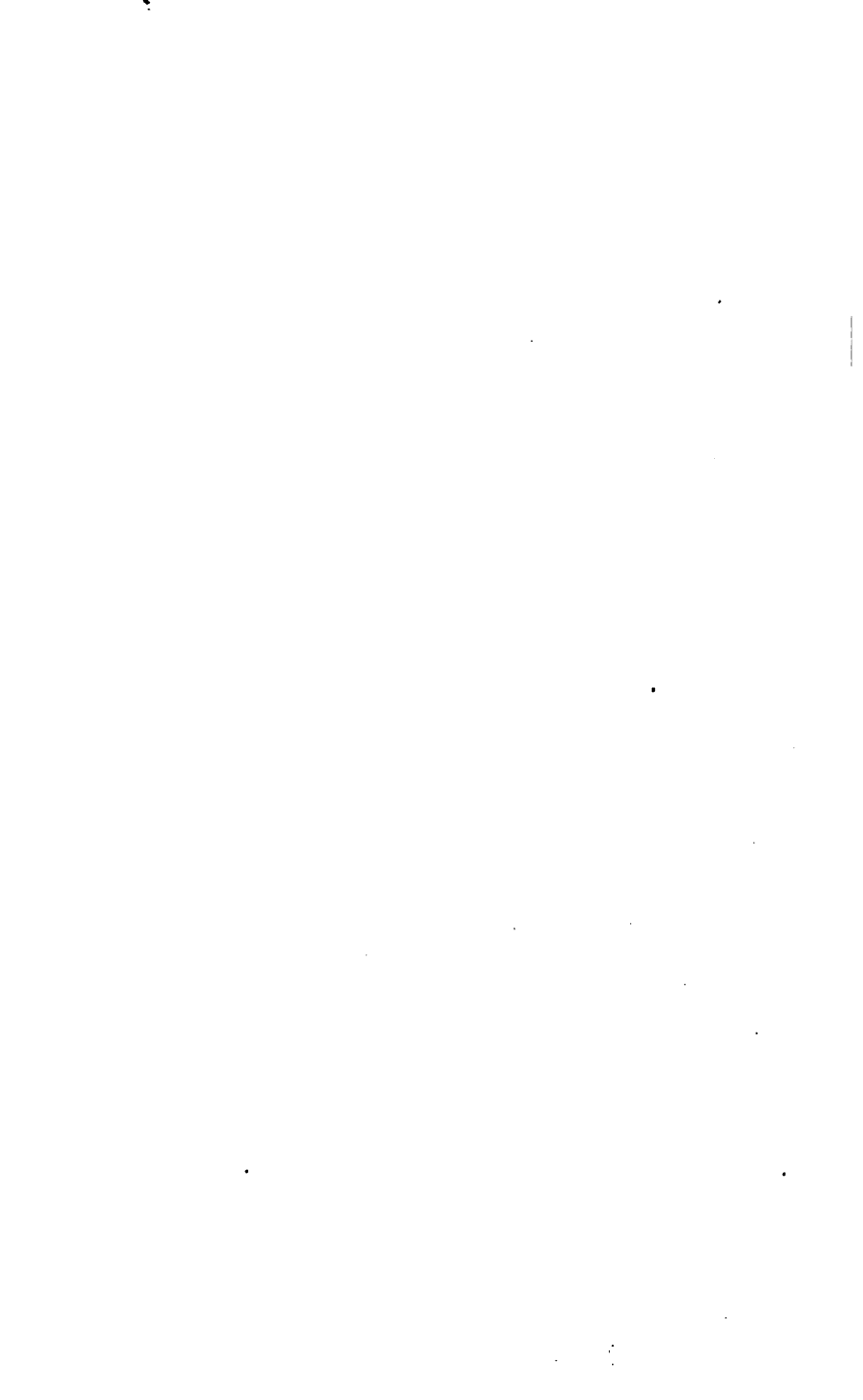
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